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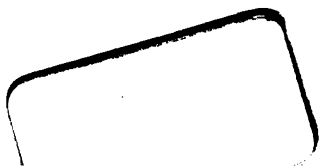
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AN  
IMPARTIAL REPORT  
OF THE  
DEBATES

THAT OCCUR IN THE  
TWO HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT,

In the Course of the Fifth Session of the Seventeenth Parliament  
of Great Britain, called to meet at Westminster, on  
Tuesday the 30th of December 1794.

WITH  
SOME ACCOUNT OF THE RESPECTIVE SPEAKERS,

AND  
NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

INCLUDING COPIES OF ALL  
STATE PAPERS, TREATIES, CONVENTIONS, &c.

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By WILLIAM WOODFALL,  
AND ASSISTANTS.

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VOL. I.

Being the SECOND SESSION of DEBATES written and published  
by the REPORTER.

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LONDON:

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1795.

J  
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# CONTENTS

OF

## THE FIRST VOLUME

OF

### THE SECOND SESSION OF

## Woodfall's Parliamentary Reports;

Being the Fifth Session of the Seventeenth Parliament of Great Britain, assembled December 30, 1794.

#### HOUSE OF LORDS.

*Tuesday, December 30, 1794.*

<b>O</b> PENING of the Session	Page 1
His Majesty's Speech	15.
Lords sworn in	3
Lord Camden's Speech, on moving the Address	15.
Speech of Lord Ponsonby, on seconding the Address	9
—— Earl of Guildford	11
—— Lord Douglas	27
—— Lord Hay	28
—— Earl of Derby	19
—— Earl Spencer	22, 51
—— Marquis Townshend	24, 44
—— Lord Boringdon	15.
—— Marquis of Lansdown	26
—— Lord Mulgrave	35
—— Earl Stanhope	42
—— Earl of Mansfield	44
—— Earl of Lauderdale	47
—— Lord Grenville	51, 61
—— Duke of Leeds	53
—— Marquis of Abercorn	54
—— Duke of Bedford	55
—— Lord Dartley	60

The Lords Address	Page 2
His Majesty's Answer thereto	62
NAMES of the MINORITY, on the Amendment to the Address	15.
Motion by Earl Stanhope	61

*Tuesday, January 6, 1795.*

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS laid on the Table	205
Motion by Lord Grenville, respecting the Trial of Warren Hastings, Esq.	15.
—— by the Marquis of Lansdown respecting PAPAS	15.
INTERFERENCE in the INTERNAL AFFAIRS of FRANCE	15.
Speech of Earl Stanhope	15. 230
—— Earl of Abingdon	211
—— Lord Auckland	213
—— Earl of Scarborough	223
—— Earl of Mansfield	224
—— Marquis of Lansdown	227
—— Duke of Bedford	232
PROTEST by Earl Stanhope	234

*Tuesday, January 13.*

TRIAL of WARREN HASTINGS, Esq.	Page 259
Speech of the Lord Chancellor (Lord Loughborough)	ib.

*Friday, January 16.*

LAND and MALT TAX BILLS read, &c.	268
--------------------------------------	-----

*Tuesday, January 20.*

MOTION by the Duke of Bedford, to discharge the ORDER of the DAY	271
---	-----

*Wednesday, January 22.*

LAND and MALT TAX BILLS receive the ROYAL ASSENT, &c.	272
--	-----

*Tuesday, January 27.*

MOTION for PEACE	422
Speech of the Duke of Bedford	ib. 479
Lord Grenville	432
Duke of Norfolk	438
Earl of Darnley	441
Bishop of Landaff	442
Lord Hawkesbury	440
Lord Strange	451
Marquis of Lansdown	ib.
Earl Spencer	456
Lord Hawke	458
Earl of Hardwicke	ib.
Marquis of Abercorn	462
Lord Mulgrave	465
Earl of Lauderdale	471
Earl of Carlisle	472
Duke of Leeds	473
Lord Chancellor	475
Earl of Guildford	476
Lord Auckland	ib.
Bishop of Durham	477

*Thursday, January 29.*

MOTIONS respecting the TREATY with the King of Prussia, and the TROOPS employed by that Monarch.	485
--	-----

*Monday, February 2.*

HABEAS CORPUS ACT	487
Speech of the Earl of Lauderdale	ib.

*Tuesday, February 3.*

HABEAS CORPUS ACT	504
Speech of the Earl of Lauderdale	ib.
Lord Grenville	517, 521
Earl of Guildford	509, 515, 526

Speech of the Duke of Leeds Page 521

Earl of Carlisle	512
Earl of Warwick	514, 516
Lord Hawkesbury	521
Duke of Portland	523
Earl Spencer	ib.
Lord Sydney	526
Lord Hay	528
Duke of Bedford	529, 538
Marquis of Lansdown	530
Lord Chancellor	533
Lord Auckland	537
PROTEST against the ACT for fur- ther SUSPENDING the HABEAS CORPUS ACT	538

*Wednesday, February 4.*

MESSAGE from his MAJESTY	540
Speech of the Earl of Lauderdale	541
Lord Grenville	ib.
Lord Darnley	ib.
Duke of Bedford	542

## HOUSE OF COMMONS.

*Tuesday, December 30, 1794.*

Speech of Mr. Sheridan, on the late TRIALS for HIGH TREASON	63, 74
Mr. Dundas	64
Mr. Jekyll	ib.
The Solicitor General (Sir J. Mitford)	65, 66
Mr. Brandling	65
The Speaker	66
Mr. Mainwaring	ib.
Mr. Fox	ib. 71
Mr. Serjeant Adair	69
Mr. Pitt	71
Mr. Lambton	72
THIRD SECRETARY OF STATE	75
Speech of Mr. Sheridan	ib. 76
Mr. Pitt	ib. 77
Mr. Dundas	76
Mr. Fox	77

HIS MAJESTY'S SPEECH

Sir E. Knatchbull's Speech, on moving  
the ADDRESS

Speech of Mr. Canning	28.
Mr. Wilberforce	32.
Mr. Duncombe	37.
Mr. Burdon	ib.
Mr. Windham	38.
Mr. Banks	39.
Mr. Buxton	94
Sir R. Hill	ib.
Mr. Pitt	96
Mr. Fox	103.
Mr. Jolliffe	113.
Mr. Dundas	119.
Mr. Sheridan	120

Speech

# CONTENTS.

Speech of Mr. Brandling Page 120  
List of the MINORITY, on the  
AMENDMENT to the ADDRESS *ib.*

*Wednesday, December 31.*

The Speaker's Statement of Lord  
HOOD'S LETTER of THANKS to the  
House, &c. 121  
Ditto, with respect to Sir C. GREY,  
and Sir J. JARVIS *ib.*

*Thursday, January 1, 1795.*

Lord Stopford's Report, respecting  
the ADDRESS 122

*Friday, January 2.*

The Speaker's Report of his MAJES-  
TY'S ANSWER to the ADDRESS *ib.*

HABEAS CORPUS ACT *ib.*

Mr. Sheridan's NOTICE of a Motion  
to repeal the ACT for its SUSPEN-  
SION *ib.*

THE NAVY 123

Speech of Mr. Morris Robinson *ib.*

— The Speaker *ib.*

— Mr. Sheridan 124

HOURS of PUBLIC BUSINESS *ib.*

The Speaker's Notice relative there-  
to *ib.*

COMMITTEE of SUPPLY *ib.*

Speech of Mr. Fox *ib.* 125, 127, 129

131, 132, 133, 135, 136

— Mr. Rolfe 125, 126

— Mr. Sheridan 125, 126, 127

136

— Mr. Steele 126, 127

— Mr. Francis 126

— Mr. Pitt 128, 132, 135, 136

— Mr. Burdon 131

— Mr. S. Thornton *ib.*

— Mr. Wilberforce 133

— Mr. Duncombe *ib.*

— Mr. Barham 134

— Mr. Martin *ib.*

— Sir W. Milner *ib.*

— Mr. Jolliffe 136

*Saturday, January 3.*

Various ACCOUNTS presented by Mr.  
Rolfe 137

*Monday, January 5.*

Lord Parker's Report, respecting the  
ADDRESS 139

SUBSIDY to PRUSSIA Page 139

Speech of Mr. Jekyll *ib.*

— Mr. Pitt *ib.*

PEACE with the FRENCH REPUBLIC *ib.*

Speech of Mr. Grey *ib.*

— Mr. Pitt 140

CITY MILITIA BILL 141

Speech of Mr. Sheridan *ib.* 142

— Mr. Ald. Curtis 141

— Mr. Ald. Anderson *ib.*

— Mr. Ald. Le Mesurier 142

CASE of the HOUSE *ib.*

Speech of Mr. Fox *ib.* 143, 144, 145,

146

— Mr. Jekyll 143, 146

— Mr. Pitt 143, 145

— Mr. Windham 146

REPEAL of the HABEAS CORPUS SUS-  
PENSION ACT *ib.*

Speech of Mr. Sheridan *ib.* 203

— Mr. Windham 166, 170

— Col. Maitland *ib.* 175

— Mr. Hardinge *ib.*

— Marquis of Titchfield *ib.*

— Mr. Fox *ib.* 192

— Mr. Erskine 175

— Mr. Serj. Adair 185

— Sir R. P. Arden 201

— Mr. T. Thompson 202

— Mr. Milbank *ib.*

— Mr. Wilberforce 203

— Mr. Pitt *ib.* 204

— Mr. Jekyll *ib.*

LIST of the MINORITY on the above  
Motion *ib.*

*Tuesday, January 6.*

THE NAVY 237

Speech of Mr. M. Robinson *ib.* 238

— The Speaker 237

— Mr. Grey *ib.*

— Mr. Pitt *ib.* 238, 239

— Mr. Dundas 237

— Mr. Pybus 238

— Mr. Fox 239

*Wednesday, January 7.*

MOTION by Mr. Lambton, relative  
to SUBSIDIARY TROOPS 240

Speech of Mr. Lambton *ib.*

— Mr. Pitt *ib.*

MOTION by Col. Maitland relative to  
BRITISH TROOPS *ib.*

PRUSSIAN SUBSIDY 241

Speech of Mr. Jekyll *ib.* 242

— Mr. Pitt 241, 242

— Mr. Sheridan *ib.* 243

Speech

J  
301

H2

GOVT DOC  
DIVISION

# CONTENTS

OF

## THE FIRST VOLUME

OF

### THE SECOND SESSION OF

## Woodfall's Parliamentary Reports;

Being the Fifth Session of the Seventeenth Parliament of Great Britain, assembled December 30, 1794.

### HOUSE OF LORDS.

*Tuesday, December 30, 1794.*

<b>O</b> PENING of the Session	Page 1
His MAJESTY'S SPEECH	ib.
Lords sworn in	3
Lord CAMDEN'S Speech, on moving the ADDRESS	ib.
Speech of Lord Ponsonby, on seconding the Address	9
— Earl of Guildford	11
— Lord Douglas	17
— Lord Hay	18
— Earl of Derby	19
— Earl Spencer	22, 51
— Marquis Townshend	24, 44
— Lord Boringdon	ib.
— Marquis of Lansdown	26
— Lord Mulgrave	35
— Earl Stanhope	42
— Earl of Mansfield	44
— Earl of Lauderdale	47
— Lord Grenville	51, 61
— Duke of Leeds	53
— Marquis of Abercorn	54
— Duke of Bedford	55
— Lord Darnley	60

The Lords ADDRESS	Page 2
HIS MAJESTY'S ANSWER thereto	62
NAMES of the MINORITY, on the Amendment to the Address	ib.
MOTION by Earl Stanhope	61

*Tuesday, January 6, 1795.*

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS laid on the Table	205
MOTION by Lord Grenville, respecting the Trial of Warren Hastings, Esq.	ib.
— by the Marquis of Lansdown respecting PAPERS	ib.
INTERFERENCE in the INTERNAL AFFAIRS of FRANCE	ib.
Speech of Earl Stanhope	ib. 230
— Earl of Abingdon	211
— Lord Auckland	213
— Earl of Scarborough	223
— Earl of Mansfield	224
— Marquis of Lansdown	227
— Duke of Bedford	232
PROTEST by Earl Stanhope	234



slacken their ardour, and either to withdraw from the contest, without having afforded their stipulated succour, or so far to fail in their exertions as to warrant the conclusion, that they were too pusillanimous to be powerful, too mean to maintain their greatness and independency, or too much engaged in other concerns to be willing to continue with the necessary zeal that contest, in the issue of which not only the welfare, but apparently the existence, of every European state was deeply involved.

Great Britain, almost singly, has acted with an earnestness proportioned to the magnitude of the object, and has unremittingly continued her efforts with firmness and intrepidity, amidst a variety of discouraging circumstances. Unawed by ill success, and unshaken by disasters, she is still determined to go on, and, trusting to the justice of her cause, to prosecute the war with unabated energy. Under such circumstances, the country can only look to the wisdom of Parliament for counsel and support.

The manner in which the Session has opened, is infinitely creditable to the British nation. Some of the best men, and the most dignified characters in each House, have stepped forward manfully, and, at the same time avowing their personal regard to the Minister, and their consciou-

ness,

ness of his good intentions, have confessed their impatience to restore the blessings of peace to their country, and recommended an immediate declaration of the readiness of Government to enter into negotiation with a view to peace. The Majority in both Houses, however, actuated by a different sentiment, though influenced by motives and governed by principles equally good, have thought it more advisable to face the difficulties of the conflict with firmness, and, by opposing extraordinary vigour and energy, on our part, to the frantic enthusiasm and almost irresistible fury of the enemy, persevere until Fortune shall afford a favourable moment for the conclusion of a peace, on grounds more safe and more honourable, and thence likely to be permanent. Having these momentous concerns sincerely at heart, every British subject, capable of regarding so stupendous an object as now presents itself to their view, with a steady eye, cannot but applaud the spirit of both Houses, which has led them to emulate their ancestors, the most shining and enviable part of whose characters has been recorded by Historians to be their undaunted intrepidity in the hour of acknowledged danger, and their undiminished ardour under circumstances apparently the most likely to create dismay, increase alarm, and infuse despondency.

ency. Happily the annals of Great Britain afford a variety of instances where the exertion of this noble fortitude has found its reward, in converting defeat and disaster into victory, and has ultimately crowned those, who were daring enough to set a world in arms at defiance, with triumph and with glory. May such rewards attend the magnanimous conduct of our country at the termination of the consequences which the present arduous crisis will necessarily produce.

JAN. 9, 1795.

# WOODFALL'S

## PARLIAMENTARY REPORTS.

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TUESDAY, DECEMBER 30, 1794.

**H**IS Majesty came down to the House of Peers at Three o'Clock, and having summoned the Commons to the Bar, opened the Session of Parliament with the following most gracious Speech :

*" My Lords and Gentlemen,*

" After the uniform experience which I have had of your zealous regard for the interests of my people, it is a great satisfaction to me to recur to your advice and assistance, at a period which calls for the full exertion of your energy and wisdom.

" Notwithstanding the disappointments and reverses which we have experienced in the course of the last campaign, I retain a firm conviction of the necessity of persisting in a vigorous prosecution of the just and necessary war in which we are engaged.

" You will, I am confident, agree with me, that it is only from firmness and perseverance that we can hope for the restoration of peace on safe and honourable grounds, and for the preservation and permanent security of our dearest interests.

" In considering the situation of our enemies, you will not fail to observe, that the efforts which have led to their successes, and the unexampled means by which alone those efforts could have been supported, have produced among themselves the pernicious effects which were to be expected; and that every thing which has passed in the interior of the country, has shewn the progressive and rapid decay of their resources, and the instability of every part of that violent and unnatural system which is equally ruinous to France, and incompatible with the tranquillity of other nations.

" The States General of the United Provinces have nevertheless been led, by a sense of present difficulties, to enter  
VOL. I. B " into

“ into negotiations for peace with the party now prevailing  
 “ in that unhappy country. No established government or  
 “ independent State can, under the present circumstances,  
 “ derive real security from such negotiations: On our part,  
 “ they could not be attempted without sacrificing both our  
 “ honour and safety to an enemy, whose chief animosity is  
 “ avowedly directed against these kingdoms.

“ I have therefore continued to use the most effectual  
 “ means for the further augmentation of my forces; and I  
 “ shall omit no opportunity of concerting the operations of  
 “ the next campaign with such of the powers of Europe as  
 “ are impressed with the same sense of the necessity of vigour  
 “ and exertion. I place the fullest reliance on the valour of  
 “ my forces, and on the affection and public spirit of my  
 “ people, in whose behalf I am contending, and whose  
 “ safety and happiness are the objects of my constant soli-  
 “ citude.

“ The local importance of Corsica, and the spirited efforts  
 “ of its inhabitants to deliver themselves from the yoke of  
 “ France, determined me not to withhold the protection  
 “ which they sought for; and I have since accepted the  
 “ crown and sovereignty of that country, according to an  
 “ instrument, a copy of which I have directed to be laid be-  
 “ fore you.

“ I have great pleasure in informing you, that I have  
 “ concluded a Treaty of Amity, Commerce, and Naviga-  
 “ tion, with the United States of America, in which it has  
 “ been my object to remove, as far as possible, all grounds  
 “ of jealousy and misunderstanding, and to improve an in-  
 “ tercourse beneficial to both countries. As soon as the rati-  
 “ fications shall have been exchanged, I will direct a copy  
 “ of this Treaty to be laid before you, in order that you may  
 “ consider of the propriety of making such provisions as may  
 “ appear necessary for carrying it into effect.

“ I have the greatest satisfaction in announcing to you the  
 “ happy event of the conclusion of a treaty for the marriage  
 “ of my son the Prince of Wales, with the Princess Caro-  
 “ line, daughter of the Duke of Brunswick. The constant  
 “ proofs of your affection for my person and family persuade  
 “ me, that you will participate in the sentiments I feel on  
 “ an occasion so interesting to my domestic happiness, and  
 “ that you will enable me to make provision for such an  
 “ establishment, as you may think suitable to the rank and  
 “ dignity of the Heir Apparent to the Crown of these king-  
 “ doms.

*" Gentlemen of the House of Commons,*

" The considerations which prove the necessity of a vigorous prosecution of the war will, I doubt not, induce you to make a timely and ample provision for the several branches of the public service, the estimates for which I have directed to be laid before you. While I regret the necessity of large additional burdens on my subjects, it is a just consolation and satisfaction to me to observe the state of our credit, commerce, and resources, which is the natural result of the continued exertions of industry under the protection of a free and well-regulated government.

*" My Lords and Gentlemen,*

" A just sense of the blessings now so long enjoyed by this country will, I am persuaded, encourage you to make every effort, which can enable you to transmit those blessings unimpaired to your posterity.

" I entertain a confident hope that, under the protection of Providence, and with a constancy and perseverance on our part, the principles of social order, morality, and religion, will ultimately be successful; and that my faithful people will find their present exertions and sacrifices rewarded by the secure and permanent enjoyment of tranquillity at home, and by the deliverance of Europe from the greatest danger with which it has been threatened since the establishment of civilized society."

His Majesty having retired, the following Peers were introduced, sworn, and took their seats:

Lord Offory	Lord Selkirk
Lord Clive	Lord Mentshp
Lord Mulgrave	Lord Bradford
Lord Lyttleton	Lord Curzon, and
Lord Yarborough.	

Lord Hertford was also sworn in Marquis of Hertford.

At five o'clock the *Lord Chancellor* read the King's Speech from the woolsack; and it having been again read as usual by the Clerk at the table,

*Earl Camden* rose, and addressed their Lordships to the following purport: The present crisis, the Earl said, was an arduous one, and called for the fullest exertion of their Lordships' energy and wisdom. Had these been common times, unaccustomed as he was to speak in public, he should not have ventured to come forward from the retired situation he had generally held in Parliament, and deliver his sentiments; but he flattered himself their Lordships would not deem him guilty of presumption, if, under such circumstances, he took the li-

erty of rising to move an Address to his Majesty, in answer to the most gracious Speech their Lordships had just heard from the Throne.

The present had been thought by many to be a time of alarm; by some it had been magnified into a time of danger; but by all it was allowed to be a time of importance. Without feeling any part of that alarm, with which some of his Majesty's subjects were impressed, or prematurely apprehending that danger which others imagined, he was ready to agree that the period in which he spoke was difficult and critical, and under that impulse it was that he offered an Address, to which he flattered himself he should have the honour of their Lordships' general concurrence.

Before he entered into the consideration of any of the topics alluded to in his Majesty's Speech, which might possibly give rise to difference of opinion, there was one which he had no doubt but he might select without danger of contest, as he was convinced there could be only one sentiment on the subject. Their Lordships would, doubtless, anticipate the circumstance to which he alluded, and feel their breasts glow with joy and gratitude for his Majesty's communication of a matter so interesting to every British subject as the approaching union of his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales with the Princess Caroline of Brunswick. So essential were the blessings that we had experienced under the mild government of the House of Hanover from the period of their having been called to the throne of these kingdoms, that there was not, he was persuaded, one of their Lordships; nor one man in the country, who would not join heartily in congratulating his Majesty on an event that promised to continue his royal line, and to give the kingdom assurance of future Sovereigns, beneficent and amiable as the Prince who at present dignified the throne with his virtues.

After paying the Prince of Wales a handsome compliment, the Earl proceeded to notice the other subjects mentioned in the Speech. He expressed his satisfaction at hearing that the American treaty was in a state so near its ultimate conclusion, as he flattered himself the policy of preserving amity with the United States must appear obvious to every well-wisher to both countries. He felt, he said, the fullest conviction of the necessity of prosecuting the war with the utmost energy and vigour. He recalled their Lordships' recollection to the commencement of the war, which had been altogether unprovoked on our part, and brought on by the repeated insults and aggressions of France. The last campaign, it was true, had been attended with reverses and disappointments; but  
 2 much

much as he might lament the chance of war, he saw no reason to infer, that therefore it was either wise or prudent to think of peace in such a moment. In the beginning of the war, under the conduct of a gallant and heroic Prince, success had crowned our exertions on the continent, and in other quarters of the globe in repeated and brilliant instances; and from the circumstances that had since occurred, it became more than ever necessary to pursue such measures as would convince our enemies we were not disheartened by temporary ill success, nor dismayed by the few advantages which the chance of war had given them. This was certainly the most improper conjuncture for making peace that could be chosen, even if negotiation were practicable; and no individual, who felt like an Englishman, would, he trusted, condescend to humble himself at the foot of France, a proud and imperious foe, elated with success, and mad with victory: Nor could any peace, should his countrymen be so far degraded and dead in spirit as to submit to sue for it, be concluded under such circumstances, that was either likely to be safe, honourable, or permanent. His Lordship said, he was prepared to expect a different proposition would be offered from some Noble Lords present; but he nevertheless relied on the firmness of Parliament, and the good sense of the people of England, which would suggest to them the necessity of continuing the war with additional energy and vigour.

Indeed he had little to doubt of their Lordships' decision, when he could undertake to prove, that, on the one hand, we could not make peace at present without the sacrifice of the honour and dignity of the kingdom; and, on the other, that we were likely and able to prosecute the war with greater exertion than ever. The temporary successes of the enemy ought not, he said, to create alarm, when it was recollected that, on our first engaging in the war, we found the enemy had made a more rapid progress into the territories of the neighbouring states than she had been able to do since, and was compelled by the Allies to retire with a rapidity far exceeding the celerity of their inroad, and to retreat within their own frontier.

His reasons for thinking any negotiation for peace impracticable at this period, his Lordship said, were, that it was not, in the smallest degree, likely to be attended to; and that if even unexpectedly France should shew herself willing to treat for peace, we had no prospect of procuring it, but by making concessions disgraceful to this country. Supposing, however, that we were so sunk in spirit, and had so far forgotten the proper pride that at all times supported our ancestors in difficulty and danger, as to bend the knee to the French Republic, could any  
map,



man, pretending to reason and reflection, think that a peace, concluded at such a moment, and under such humiliating circumstances, had the smallest chance of permanency? Admitting, for the sake of argument, that a peace were within our reach, who would advise us to disarm, and receive the French into the country? We knew their principles, and their conduct, wherever they had gained a footing, taught us to dread the contagion of such principles. With regard to the situation of France comparatively with this country in point of resource, it was easy to shew, that while we were in a state of almost unexampled prosperity, the resources of France were nearly exhausted, and reduced to a degree of distress unparalleled in the history of that extensive and populous kingdom. The law for enforcing the circulation of assignats, and the law of the *maximum*, on which extraordinary measures they had placed the strongest reliance, and which had struck other countries with astonishment, as the most violent stretches of tyrannic power that ever were attempted, they had found themselves obliged to abandon; and though they had not repealed them, they no longer attempted to carry those laws into execution. The consequence was, assignats had found their level, and sunk to their natural state of depreciation: They were now, according to the last accounts which he had received, his Lordship said, at 75 per cent. discount; or, to illustrate his meaning, and make himself understood by a familiar instance, 96 assignats must be given for 24 louis d'ors. At the same time that the French circulation was thus lowered, the expence of the government was enormous, and the price of provisions of every kind raised to such an extravagant height throughout the country, as to be beyond the reach of ordinary purchase. The system of terror, which had been maintained under the late leaders of the Convention, was at an end, and the guillotine was no longer in perpetual exercise. Their councils had ceased to manifest their former vigour, but were, from the constitution of them, necessarily weak and nerveless. Instead of the Committee of Public Safety, which had been permanent, and which had shewn so much energy, it was now composed of members who changed every month: In a word, the state of France was a state equally destitute of internal comfort and security, provisions and resources.

Happy indeed was the picture that this country presented, our situation being in every respect the reverse of that of our enemies. Our own national force, both by sea and land, was the largest that Great Britain had ever known, nor were we destitute of Allies. We had every reason to hope for assistance from Austria; and although, from a sense of present difficulty,

difficulty, the States General had thought proper to enter into a negotiation with France, possibly their withdrawing themselves from the contest might not prove disadvantageous to this country, as it would restore a large portion of our forces, and enable us to employ them more usefully in other services. In short, the Dutch had afforded but an uncertain and inauspicious aid to the common cause; and their secession under such circumstances was the less to be regretted, than it would have been had their zeal in the progress of the war kept pace with our own.

The state of our revenue, the Earl said, was most flourishing, our resources were infinite, and our credit extraordinarily good. The public income this year, he had the happiness to learn, fell but little short of its amount in the last; and, as a proof of the enviable state and stability of national credit, he might instance the ease and facility with which rumour said an immense loan had been negotiated and obtained in the city.

From this comparative state of the resources of Great Britain and France, the inference that naturally presented itself was, that this was not the fit moment for making peace, however desirable that event must be to every man, who wished to participate in its blessings, and to put an end to the horrors of war. Those who were the most pressing for peace must of necessity wait till something more like harmony was established in France, and the Government had assumed more permanency than had hitherto belonged to it. The menaces and insults to this country, with which France had begun the war, she had not yet thought proper to retract. The spirit of the people of England, he was satisfied, was too high to allow them to crouch to an insulting and a successful foe. He believed they were in general anxious for the prosecution of the war; that they were sufficiently conscious of the value and importance of the successes we had experienced in the East and West Indies, and the glorious victory that had been obtained by a Noble Earl on the ocean on the 1st of June; and that they did not, in consequence of the reverses of a single campaign, wish to drop it, which they could not do without the most obvious disadvantage and disgrace. The voice of the people of England must be heard, whenever it was constitutionally given: The cause was in their hands; and when they recollected that the destruction of the British constitution was the object of the French, he was satisfied the British nation would sooner spend their last shilling, and shed the last drop of their blood, than suffer a constitution, under which they daily enjoyed such innumerable blessings, to be destroyed.

The

The Earl concluded a very able speech with an apology to their Lordships for having so long intruded on their patience, but hoped he had stated arguments so undeniable and so well founded, that the Address he should have the honour of moving, which certainly went to pledge the House to a prosecution of the war under the present circumstances, would meet with their Lordships' unanimous concurrence.

The Address was as follows :

" Most Gracious Sovereign,

" WE, your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, in Parliament assembled, beg leave to return your Majesty our humble thanks for your Majesty's most gracious Speech from the Throne.

" We eagerly embrace the first opportunity of laying before your Majesty our dutiful and respectful congratulations on the auspicious event of the conclusion of the treaty for the marriage of his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales with the Princess Caroline of Brunswick. While we partake in the gratification which must arise to your Majesty on an occasion so interesting to your Majesty's domestic happiness, and to that of the illustrious and amiable Prince whose virtues are so justly dear to us, we look forward, with the utmost satisfaction, to the hope that, in a long and uninterrupted line of descent, this country may continue to enjoy the blessings which it has experienced under your Majesty's paternal government, and under the auspicious reigns of the Sovereigns of the House of Brunswick.

" We beg leave to assure your Majesty, that we shall with the utmost cheerfulness concur in enabling your Majesty to make provision for such an establishment as may be suitable to the rank and dignity of the Heir Apparent of these kingdoms.

" Permit us to assure your Majesty, that, notwithstanding the disappointments and reverses of the last campaign, we concur with your Majesty in a firm conviction of the necessity of persisting in a vigorous prosecution of the present just and necessary war ; being persuaded that the attainment of a just and honourable peace, and the preservation and permanent security of all our dearest interests, are only to be hoped for from firmness and perseverance : That, impressed with these sentiments, we derive additional encouragement from observing that the measures adopted by our enemies have produced amongst themselves the pernicious effects which were to be expected from them ; and that every thing which has passed in that country has manifested the rapid decay of their resources, and the instability of every part of that violent and unnatural system, which is equally ruinous to France, and incompatible with the tranquillity of other States.

" What

“ Whatever may be the issue of the negotiations into which the United  
 “ Provinces have been induced to enter, we are persuaded that no establish-  
 “ ed Government or independent State can, under the present circum-  
 “ stances, derive real security from such negotiations; and that, on our  
 “ part, they could not be attempted, without the sacrifice of our Honour and  
 “ safety to an enemy whose chief animosity is directed against these king-  
 “ doms. In this state of affairs, we are sensible of the necessity of your  
 “ Majesty’s having continued to use effectual means for the further aug-  
 “ mentation of your forces; and we rely on your Majesty’s omitting no  
 “ opportunity of concerting the operations of the next campaign with such  
 “ of the Powers of Europe as are impressed with the same sense of the ne-  
 “ cessity of vigour and exertion; and we trust that the valour of your Ma-  
 “ jesty’s forces, and the public spirit of the British nation, will enable you  
 “ Majesty to provide effectually for the interests and safety of your faithfu  
 “ people, in whose behalf your Majesty is now contending, and for whose  
 “ happiness your Majesty has ever shown the most paternal care and soli-  
 “ citude.

“ We return your Majesty our grateful thanks for the communication  
 “ which your Majesty has been pleased to direct to be made to us of the in-  
 “ strument by which your Majesty has accepted the Crown and Sovereignty  
 “ of Corsica; fully sensible that the local importance of that island, and  
 “ the spirited efforts of its inhabitants to deliver themselves from the yoke  
 “ of France, have justly determined your Majesty not to withhold the pro-  
 “ tection which they fought for.

“ We beg leave to express to your Majesty our satisfaction in learning  
 “ that a treaty of amity, commerce, and navigation, has been concluded  
 “ between your Majesty and the United States of America; and to assure  
 “ your Majesty, that we shall willingly concur in such measures as may best  
 “ tend to remove the grounds of jealousy and misunderstanding, and to im-  
 “ prove an intercourse beneficial to both countries.

“ We entreat your Majesty to be persuaded, that a just sense of the bless-  
 “ ings we have now so long enjoyed will animate us to every effort which  
 “ can enable us to transmit those blessings unimpaired to our posterity;  
 “ And that it is our earnest and confident hope that, under the protection  
 “ of the Divine Providence, and with constancy and perseverance on our  
 “ part, the principles of social order, morality, and religion, will ultimately  
 “ be successful; and that your Majesty’s faithful people may find their  
 “ present exertions and sacrifices rewarded by the secure and permanent en-  
 “ joyment of tranquillity at home, and by the deliverance of Europe from  
 “ the greatest danger with which it has been threatened since the establishment  
 “ of civilized society.”

*Lord Ponsonby* (Earl of Besborough) rose to second the Ad-  
 dress, which he did in a short but emphatic speech. He said,  
 the Noble Earl, who had moved the Address, had so fully ex-  
 plained

plained the grounds on which he brought it forward, that he should trespass on their Lordships' time but for a very few minutes. He stated, that he had himself taken no part in the proceedings of that House, relative to the war, having been absent from his country for the last three years; but, viewing it as at present circumstanced, he thought it would betray a want of spirit and firmness to sue for peace to a triumphant foe, that had never before disgraced the British character. He had no doubt but that their Lordships would unite in advising and supporting the prosecution of a war against the common enemy of established governments, civilized society, morality, and religion—an enemy, who had rudely torn down their own constitution, and with savage eagerness destroyed every thing valuable that belonged to it, and were now anxious to level the constitution of every other country, and, by a system of unexampled instability, anarchy, and ruin, involve all Europe in the same confusion, the same tyranny, and defiance of all order and law, which they themselves experienced.

His Lordship joined most cordially with the Noble Earl in that part of his speech, in which he had expressed his joy and satisfaction at his Majesty's gracious communication of an event so likely to afford pleasure to the august Sovereign of these realms, and the people of England in general, as the approaching marriage of his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales and the Princess Caroline of Brunswick. Every circumstance, that could tend to gratify the parental feelings of his Majesty, and contribute to the comfort and happiness of his family, must be sensibly felt and acknowledged by every British subject; and a circumstance in which the nation was so immediately interested as the approaching nuptials of the Prince of Wales, could not but diffuse the most sincere and heartfelt satisfaction to all, who justly estimated the blessings they had experienced under the mild government of the House of Hanover. He did not therefore doubt but that their Lordships would cheerfully concur in providing such an establishment for his Royal Highness, as should be suitable to the rank and dignity of the heir apparent to the Crown of these kingdoms.

With regard to the war, his Lordship said, he trusted there would be but one opinion. We must either degrade ourselves by the most abject humiliation in the eyes of all Europe, or prosecute the war with the utmost energy and vigour. The cause was not, as had been falsely imagined, a wish to interfere with the internal government of France, nor a desire to make La Vendée the seat of hostility; but it was the cause of the British constitution, for the existence of which, and the security

curity of our liberties, we were fighting. No Englishman, he was persuaded, could suffer himself for a moment to listen to a compromise of such a cause. The constitution had been handed down to us in a state of enviable excellence and perfection by our ancestors, and we were bound by every tie of moral obligation to deliver it to posterity unimpaired and entire. In such a cause, however anxiously he might wish for peace, he should be sorry to see the ministers of Great Britain in treaty with the democratic despots of France, and crouching for peace, when it could not possibly be obtained without disgrace and degradation of the national character. [The Noble Lord spoke extremely low; but as far as what he said reached the Reporter's ear, the preceding were substantially the arguments with which his Lordship supported the Address.]

*The Earl of Guildford* rose immediately as Lord Ponsonby sat down, and began with declaring that he had flattered himself with hopes that his Majesty's ministers had collected wisdom from misfortune and disaster, and experience from obvious error and palpable impolicy. How great then was his astonishment at having heard from the Throne a speech, that gave neither promise nor prospect of peace, which must be so desirable to all their Lordships and the country in general, and to find an Address moved, with scarcely one paragraph of which, he or the Noble Lords who had with him concurred in reprobating the war, into which ministers had wantonly and unnecessarily plunged the country, could possibly agree. Nor did he think there were present any set of men who had the real good of their country at heart, who could agree to it; and certain he was that the great mass of the people without doors must be very much surprised if they did, for upon all accounts, but on none more than the folly of obstinately persevering in so hopeless, so miserable, and so ruinous a contest, the country must see and feel the impropriety and wantonness of ministers carrying it on, merely to serve their own interested purposes, without any possible advantage even being held out to the country to induce them to countenance such a complicated system of ignorance, mystery, and confusion any longer. He knew of no possible motive that any man of honesty or common sense could have for agreeing to the proposed Address, except it was to proceed upon that destructive idea of blind confidence in ministers, and in the same ministers who had brought us into the distracted and miserable situation in which we were now involved: And from those who had hitherto placed in those ministers that blind and implicit confidence to which he alluded, he would ask only this—What was the claim of ministers for a continuance of it?—nothing, as far

as he knew, but a total and complete failure in all their transactions, foreign and domestic, military or diplomatic; this was their pretension to confidence hitherto, and he trusted their conduct had sufficiently evinced to what extent it ought to be given them in future. In the whole of the Address, except the part which he would come to soon, there was not a paragraph or a sentence that did not loudly call for opposition from that House, except it was their wish to give themselves entirely up to the misguidance and ignorance of those ministers, from unworthy confidence in their rectitude, who had brought us into our present disastrous situation. No one of their Lordships, the Earl said, would, he hoped, so far misapprehend him, as to imagine for a moment that he involved the part of the Address that alluded to the marriage of the Prince of Wales in this general reprobation: He was among the first to give his most hearty concurrence in the congratulation offered in the Address, as he always would to any thing that could in the smallest degree contribute to the satisfaction and happiness of the illustrious family upon the throne. The communication in his Majesty's Speech respecting the marriage of the Prince of Wales, he considered to be a subject that must produce the most heartfelt joy, and excite the gratulation of all their Lordships, and every British subject, who was sensible, as they all were, of the many and substantial blessings which this country has enjoyed under the mild and equal government of the illustrious House of Hanover—a succession introduced to the extinction of Popery, the exclusion of the heirs of James the Second, and for the purpose of securing to the people of Great Britain those rights which they must ever hold to be their dearest and best interests, and which they can only expect a continuance of from the happy continuance of that family upon the throne, and their perseverance in the same principles which placed them in that exalted situation; any circumstance then that led to extend or secure that succession must be highly gratifying to Englishmen. On the present occasion he would only say, that if any thing could be wanting to make their happiness more complete, it would be amply made up by the amiable virtues, the talents, and the distinguished public and private character of the illustrious Prince, whose future happiness was so much connected with this promising alliance.

Having in the most handsome terms expressed his satisfaction on the approaching marriage, the Earl took notice of the arguments of the two Noble Lords who had moved and seconded the Address, with neither of whom he said he could agree; for he thought, before any body could assent to the language

guage of the Speech and the Address, he must be satisfied on three distinct points, and these contained propositions which nothing that had yet been said had the least tendency to prove; first, the wisdom of originally entering into the war; the necessity of persevering in and carrying it on, amidst all the difficulties we laboured under; and lastly, the prudence and policy of trusting the conduct of it to those who had, by the uniform disasters and dangers that followed their counsels, brought us into our present melancholy situation:—These points had been so frequently discussed in that House before, that it was not his intention to press them that day, more particularly as there would be other opportunities; but he had no hesitation in saying, that his opinions remained the same upon each as they had been when those questions were discussed last year. He denied, and he believed all Europe agreed with him, the wisdom of entering into the war, the necessity of persevering in it, and the prudence with which it had been conducted. The Noble Earl who moved the Address, had taken pains to depreciate the present state of France; he would put it to the House to say, Whether *we* were now in as good a situation as when we began the war?—Certainly we were not the same people that we were three years ago. He had heard, in another place, it was true, the blessings which the country at that time enjoyed, and had a prospect of enjoying, under the prosperous influence of peace for fifteen years to come, stated in a speech, which, for eloquence and glowing language, had seldom been equalled by any statesman or orator at any time. He wished them only to reflect on that period, and the prospect it held out, and then compare it with the present state of this disastrous country:—Then, every thing appeared favourable; now, all was distress and discomfiture; then, the blessings of peace were conspicuous in all parts of the country; now, the melancholy effects of the war were equally notorious. The contrast was most striking. The prediction of peace, and the eulogy on its blessings, was followed immediately with all the horrors of war. Our manufactures at that time flourished, our commerce was increased, our expenditure reduced, and peace and prosperity went hand in hand together; but where had this prospect vanished now? Would any man say that there was the least chance of its being realized under the present management of his Majesty's ministers?

The Noble Earl who moved the Address, seemed to lay much stress upon what he stated to be the situation of France. With regard to resources, he thought it equally became that House and the Parliament, to consider the relative situation of this country now to what it was before, and to form their decision



cision more from facts than prejudices. But allowing, for the moment, the necessity of continuing the war, he would ask, Were the people of the country of the same mind that they were at the outset of it, when they felt themselves in the highest expectation of success and prosperity, and even, he believed, to a degree possessing a sort of mad inclination for war, by whatever means it was created? He contended, that notwithstanding the prosperous state of the country at that time, and the ease with which it might have been continued, the ambitious and interested views of ministers had overcome every idea of moderation and patriotism, and led them, merely to preserve their places, to profess a proud contempt of peace; to barter the dearest interests of the country for their own selfish motives. The people were not the same; indeed the only thing that remained the same, was the conduct of ministers, and that shameful system of ignorance, imprudence, and obstinacy, which had been attached from the first to the principle and conduct of the present ruinous and miserable war.

The Noble Earl had said that this period of disappointments and reverses was not the time to sue for peace; what a pity it was that he did not give his advice to his friends in office, when our situation had worn a very different aspect!—And what consolation, he would ask, did the language of the Speech and Address hold out to the country, as well as the speeches of the two Noble Lords? Shortly this:—That after all we have lost in men and money—all we have suffered from the ravages attendant upon warfare, the prospect of peace, while the system of ministers was persevered in, was still at a distance as great as ever.

His Lordship proceeded to take notice of the treaties, or *gratuitous* engagements as they might be called, which this country had entered into with other powers, and which he insisted, from their nature and effect, had proved not to be made so much for the sake of securing allies to assist us, as to pay others to allow us to become their friends in the contest against France. From the pernicious tendency and effects of those treaties, he trusted that Parliament never would consider them as a binding obligation to prevent the attainment of peace, if it could be had. They had been framed to serve the interested and ambitious purposes of ministers, and were, no doubt, advantageous to them, however detrimental to the State; for by those we were bound not to make peace without the consent of all parties; and this tended to prolong the existence of a war, upon which it was clear that the existence of the ministers themselves, in their present situations, entirely depended. It might be for the interest of Austria, that such treaties

treaties were entered into ; but had we no other interest to look to ? How was Holland to be saved but by negotiating a peace ? And would it not become us to join and consult upon the best possible terms of concluding that peace for her which was so intimately connected with our own safety ? The Noble Earl seemed to think that in this case there was a danger that we might be obliged to make too great sacrifices before we could accomplish that object. In his mind, no sacrifices that we had to make would be too great, particularly when it was notorious that, but for our interference, Holland might have remained neutral, and in the same state of happiness and prosperity as Denmark, Sweden, Sicily, and the other countries who had acted with more wisdom than we had manifested. On the subject of Corsica, he felt nothing to congratulate the country upon ; on the contrary, he thought the annexing of that island to the Crown of Great Britain, the most fatal event of the war. It would, he verily believed, be an endless source of expence, jealousy, disquiet, and danger.

He agreed that there might be some objections stated to an immediate peace ; but while the war was to be carried on, they ought to carry it on like statesmen, to prevent the overgrowing power and ambition of a great and dangerous rival ; and not, like foolish children, or idiots, quarrelling about trifles, with which we had no right or interest to interfere at all. Much of what he could say upon the conduct of the war he would waive at this time ; but he must insist on the impracticability of carrying it on, if conquering France, or dictating a government to her, was the object ; and he was sure that no reasonable man, out of the Cabinet, would differ from him in that opinion. Before such an absurd and visionary speculation could be realized, one of two things must happen, both of which were equally improbable—that we could march triumphantly to Paris, or that the people of France should be so disgusted with the revolutionary government, that they would destroy the Convention. With regard to the state of France, we had nothing to govern us but the vague assertions of ministers, who had proved throughout the whole of the war that they were completely misinformed, and miserably ignorant of all that happened in that country.

The Earl dwelt with great emphasis on the various errors and blunders which the ministers had fallen into during the war, at different periods, either from ignorance or misinformation.—He replied to what the Noble Earl (Lord Camden) had said respecting the repeal of the two decrees, the law of the *maximum*, and the law for the enforcement of the currency of assignats, and also on the exhausted resources of France ; and observed

observed that it was but a poor consolation to Englishmen, to tell them that, though their resources were nearly exhausted, the enemy was in a worse situation; and even this was only a bare assertion; nor was there any thing to support the fact, but the exploded authority of ministers, who lost no opportunity of exposing their own ignorance and imbecility, in all matters of state. When it was said that the victories which France had obtained cost her so much, might he not ask how much less had our disasters cost this country? He contended, that all the difficulties of making peace were greatly increased by the continuance in office of those ministers who had involved us in such embarrassments.

He traced the different events, which marked the bad success of our military operations, from the dividing the army, after the capture of Valenciennes, to the end of this campaign. He dwelt particularly on the evacuation of Toulon, the failure after the affair of Landrecies, the unfortunate result of the expedition to the West Indies, particularly at Guadaloupe, notwithstanding the active and able conduct of the commanders. He stated the useless detention of the troops at Southampton, and after delivering the handsomest panegyric on the conduct and military character of the Duke of York, who, he said, had fairly done justice to the superiority of the French, attributed all the failures to the ignorance, the obstinacy, and the weakness of ministers. With regard to our operations at sea, except the brilliant victory gained on the 1st of June by Earl Howe, which included the meritorious bravery of British officers and seamen, there was nothing but disaster and loss, from want of vigorous exertions at the Admiralty Board, and adequate protection to our commerce. At this moment, if report spoke the truth, there was a French squadron in the chops of the Channel, which prevented the sailing of 500 sail of most valuable merchantmen, who were by mere accident saved from becoming their prey. In negotiation they had failed equally: The diplomatic subtlety observed by ministers respecting the Prussian treaty, could only be equalled by Prussian perfidy; and his Lordship in the most animated and pathetic manner reprobated the application of British money to the worst and most accursed of all purposes, to enable Prussia to assist in the destruction of the liberties of Poland. Having fully discussed the conduct of ministers with regard to foreign affairs, the Earl said he could not sit down without adverting to their conduct at home, where, by exaggerated alarms, they had made that and the other House of Parliament the instruments of circulating plausible fables of dangerous insurrections, imaginary plots, and visionary treasons, by which

which the country was placed in a situation under which no individual was safe in his person or property, though it had turned out by the verdict of British juries, that there was neither proof nor probability that any such had existed. The Earl concluded a most masterly speech by pathetically imploring the House to give due consideration to the importance of their decision that night, and assured them that by taking the first opportunity to restore peace and tranquillity to the world, they would be amply repaid by the prayers of the orphans, the wives, the widows, and mothers of our brave seamen and soldiers, and by contemplating the many and important blessings which its effects would produce on all ranks and descriptions of society. His Lordship then moved, that after the third clause in the Address, the following amendment be adopted; declaring it was the same as had been submitted to their Lordships last year—

“ To state to his Majesty the determination of this House, to support his Majesty in the measures necessary to maintain the honour and independence of the Crown, and to provide for the defence and safety of the nation; but at the same time to advise his Majesty to take the earliest means of concluding a peace with the French nation, on such terms as it may be reasonable and prudent to insist on— That whenever such terms can be obtained, we trust that no obstacle to the acceptance of them will arise from any consideration respecting the forms and nature of the government which may prevail in France.”

Lord Douglas (Earl of Morton) said, he trusted no Peer who felt like an Englishman would take the advice given by the Noble Earl. Was the moment of misfortune and ill success the moment for us to crouch to an insolent foe, throw ourselves at the feet of France, and sue for peace? Sooner than his countrymen would submit to such degradation and disgrace, he had the fullest confidence that every British subject would concur in spending last his shilling, and shedding the last drop of his blood. Was the conduct recommended to be listened to for a moment by men, whose minds were enlightened, and whose breasts glowed with ardour in the cause of their country and its constitution? Was it by such an humiliating instance of pusillanimity that our ancestors raised the British character to such a pinnacle of exalted glory, and was it by so disgraceful a conduct that we meant to give the death-blow to English honour and English character? He trusted with confidence, that the people in general would spurn at the grovelling idea, and would join heart and hand in prosecuting the war till they had a prospect of obtaining a safe, honourable, and permanent

peace. Their Lordships, he was persuaded, did not need his warning voice to remind them of the total destitution of principle and morality in the enemy, they had to cope with: That even if their government was more stable, there could be little reliance on their fidelity: That the Noble Earl who moved the Address, had very satisfactorily proved that the resources of France were in a miserable state of exhaustion; while those of this country remained prosperous, unimpaired in any material degree, and adequate to great energy and exertion. He reminded their Lordships that all our efforts had not been successful; that our resources were still great and respectable; that the cause of the war yet continued to be what it ever had been, both just, necessary, and in some degree indispensable; that the country were still willing to prosecute the enterprise in which they had originally engaged with so much promptitude and alacrity; and that, above all, we had such important objects in view, as, in the mind of every honest and thinking person in the community, were competent to sanction all their efforts in bringing this important conflict to a desirable conclusion.

*Lord Hay* (Earl of Kinnoul) declared he had yet heard nothing against the Address, or the further prosecution of the war, but assertions perfectly unfounded. He had supported the war from its commencement, because he thought it just and necessary. The very same reasons which influenced him to vote for a similar measure last year, recurred to his mind with redoubled force on this. Religion, the laws, and the efficiency and existence of well-regulated government, and all the solid and fundamental principles and considerations connected with them, were no more to be abandoned now, than they were then. The support of these, he trusted, was full as much and earnestly at heart by the great body of people in this country as ever, and no one had yet ventured to propose with whom there was the least possibility of treating on grounds either honourable or secure. He therefore begged to see the practicability of what the Amendment stated fairly made out, and till it was, he should be for continuing the war, as the only likely means of bringing the enemy to reasonable terms. His Lordship said, he was persuaded the sinews of war in France must be by this time nearly exhausted; it was inconceivable that those could long exist, or that any resources could be equal to such an expenditure as must be the consequence of the extraordinary situation of that unhappy country. He was aware of the usual miseries attendant on war, and regretted them sincerely, as all their Lordships undoubtedly did; but these were unavoidable evils, and it became those necessarily and justly struggling under them, to bear their share of them  
with

with due fortitude and resolution.—On this principle, he would not think so meanly of his countrymen, as to suppose they would not cheerfully accord with any additional burden so honourable a conflict as they were again called to support, would unavoidably occasion. The spirit of the country would be roused, and the East India Company, one of the first great corporate bodies, had already set the example. He congratulated their Lordships on the nuptials that were soon to take place between his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales and the illustrious Princess Caroline of Brunswick, and was satisfied that their Lordships entertained the same sentiments which he felt on this accession to the happiness of the family on the throne, under whose mild and paternal government these nations enjoyed so many inestimable blessings. He was, his Lordship said, extremely anxious for unanimity in carrying on measures, in his apprehension, so very essential to the welfare and credit of the nation, and which the peculiar circumstances in which we were involved, rendered altogether unavoidable. He would on these grounds vote for the Address, and hoped it would meet with the general approbation of the public both within and without doors.

*The Earl of Derby* began with observing that he had been uniform in his conduct respecting the war; he had invariably reprobated it as unjust, unnecessary, and impolitic in the extreme. That had been his opinion, and that continued to be his opinion still, but if it was possible, it was more confirmed than ever by the disastrous events of the last campaign. Were he disposed to consider the question before their Lordships as perfectly new, and as perfectly unattainable in all its points, the manner in which it had been brought forward was, he thought, directly calculated to impress that view of it on his mind. What was the ostensible cause of the war at its origin, and last year? The safety of the Dutch, and to prevent the navigation of the Scheldt. Of neither did the Speech of this year take the least notice, for both were out of the question. Every thing originally in view seemed now to be perfectly relinquished; but the single prosecution of a war, which his Lordship never had acquiesced in, and which was the more to be deplored the longer it continued. He imputed the whole of our disasters to the misconduct of ministers. Bad as it was, the mode in which it had been carried on, was, in his opinion, still worse. He declared, he purposely waved a great many topics, and attached himself to the impracticability of proceeding in this fatal and absurd enterprise, without the smallest prospect of success. He ridiculed the idea that the French would be compelled to treat, from the state of their finances, and desired to know of their Lordships upon what facts they entertained this opinion. He denied that the public were in possession of a

single document that would warrant such a conclusion. He requested that the state of the opposite armies might be inspected and compared. He had, he said, conversed with many officers distinguished for their honour and respectability in their profession, and all of them agreed in asserting the superior discipline of the enemy, and the skilful manner in which they had been found prepared and equipped for action. He referred to instances in which it was impossible for our troops to be led on to action, all owing to the want of those attentions which were so invariably kept up or preserved among the French. And he asked whether it was from their repeated instances of uncommon energy and exertion, their complete clothing and plenty of provisions, that ministers concluded, that their resources were not full as abundant as ever? Besides, his Lordship desired to know on what information this allegation had been thrown out. If it was only on that intelligence which ministers possessed, it could not, as he conceived, be in any degree true, or deserve the least credit. For in every part of their conduct through the whole of this most unaccountable business, their ignorance was palpable and uniform. They habitually groped in the dark, and never proceeded like rational agents, aware of what they were about, or in what their measures were most likely to end. He would assert, that no honest and enlightened mind, not interested directly or indirectly, would wish that the issue of the present question depended on the impotence of the enemy, either in men or money. The fact, in his Lordship's opinion, was, that we could not go on a more forlorn hope, or look to a more desperate termination of the present troubles. He reminded their Lordships that our own resources could not always last, and that the way in which so much blood and treasure had been expended, would hardly bear reflection. After all the money and lives wasted in this war, what had been gained, what acquisitions had we made, what victories had we won?

His Lordship took occasion to advert to the capture of Corsica. He deplored the expence and inconvenience it would bring upon the country, and denied that it would answer any of the purposes held out. Though its local situation might render it capable of some of the advantages mentioned, he begged their Lordships to bear in mind the peculiar circumstances under which we acquired it. Who would say what the force detained for that purpose might not have done in another quarter, or how profitably they might have been occupied in the West Indies? He believed few of their Lordships would, at this moment, vouch for the safety of our islands in those parts, as it was pretty generally understood an armament of the enemy was probably there before this time, of a  
force

force much superior to ours. Indeed he knew not what to think of the present measures, as the reports of the moment gave him and their Lordships to understand, that the chops of the Channel were now actually blocked up by a fleet of the enemy. Their depredations had almost annihilated our trade, or, however, occasionally suspended our commerce in a degree altogether unexampled in any former war. These, in his Lordship's conception, were not very auspicious circumstances for a new campaign. How were all these disadvantages to be compensated? Certainly by none of our acquisitions. He was persuaded, that Corsica would not indemnify the additional expence it would inevitably create to the country. Nor did he apprehend this could be any object to the ministers in planning or accepting of its seizure. There were many individuals to provide for, and the salaries of the officers in the new kingdom, he suspected must be provided by the old; so that, in fact, the greatest use to which this boasted territory could be applied, was to afford ministers an apology for increasing their long list of dependants, and extending that patronage which was already so enormous and so notoriously abused.

He desired to know how the country could be supposed competent to the immense and habitual expence of raising men, as he understood was the case in different counties, at twenty-five guineas a man. Formerly many landmen were admitted aboard his Majesty's ships, which greatly facilitated the manning of the navy, Captains of men of war thinking themselves well off, if they had two thirds of their complement seamen and one third landmen. By the wonderful exertions in recruiting now every-where made for the land-service, he doubted it would soon be found that seamen and landmen would be equally scarce. This observation, however, he hazarded only by the bye, leaving professional men to make what use of it they pleased. All these considerations disposed him to accede to the Amendment, and by no means give any further implicit confidence to men whose measures he could not but condemn. He apologized for taking up so much of their Lordships' time, but could not help, before he sat down, suggesting his doubts to their Lordships, that there must be a change of ministry before any hopes of a serious negotiation could take place. Much had been said about whom we were to treat with. With whom could their Lordships imagine our enemies would treat? Here, he presumed, was the most insuperable objection to a peace. France undoubtedly would not treat with the present ministers. But he trusted that objection would also be overcome, and that the country would soon be desirous of placing their confidence in such individuals as were qualified



lified by their principles and capacities to substantiate the wishes of their fellow-subjects.—He denied the influence of party motives, declaring what he said, before God and their Lordships, to be the real sentiments of his heart. He had not another wish than for the welfare of his country. This might sometimes inspire him with warmth, yet he hoped never to address their Lordships but in the language of a gentleman, and with the respect which he knew to be their due. He very cordially acceded to all that had been said by the Noble Lords who had spoken before him concerning the negotiation of a domestic nature, so consonant, he well knew, to all their Lordships' feelings, as well as his own. He declared he should always feel happy in whatever augmented the happiness of the Royal Personages alluded to, and he should never fail in being forward to realize that sentiment whenever occasion offered. He concluded by giving his full assent to the amendment, and signified his most ardent desire that the war might not be pursued any longer, and that ministers would pause, and attempt to regain the confidence they had so justly forfeited, by retracting their former principles, and treading back the paths they had so blindly pursued.

*Earl Spencer* said, it had not been his intention to have mingled in the debate of the day; but something that had fallen from the Noble Earl made it necessary that he should say a word or two. He was not much in the habit of speaking in public, and whenever he rose to address their Lordships, it was under a considerable degree of difficulty and diffidence. This however he would assure the House, that whenever he did speak, he would speak the sincere sentiments of his mind. Like the Noble Earl who spoke lately (*Lord Derby*), he had preserved an uniform and invariable conduct from the commencement of the war. He felt, from the first, that the war was just and necessary, he said so at the time, while he delivered the sentiments only of a private individual; and since he had been called upon to take a part in the councils of state, and to bear his share of the burden of public business, he continued to consider the war in the same point of view. His Lordship said, he admitted much of the premises of the Noble Earl, but he must beg leave to draw very different conclusions. He admitted that the enemy had made most extraordinary efforts, and had carried on the war hitherto with a degree of unexampled vigour and exertion. Their resources had hitherto enabled them to do wonders; but he thought, as it was utterly impossible that they should be enabled to go on in the same manner, it was more than ever necessary for us to persevere in the war, and prosecute it with unremitting assiduity.

assiduity. Even were an opposite line of conduct advisable, he did not believe it was practicable, but that the most likely means to render it so, would be a vigorous pursuance of hostilities. Some allusions had been made by a Noble Earl who spoke early, to the department over which he had the honour to be placed. Having so very recently come into that situation he felt that what he said officially, must be delivered under delicate and rather awkward circumstances; but in that, as in every other situation, he would always be ready to give such explanations respecting our marine, as were consistent with the real state of the fact, and as could with prudence and safety be communicated. He had the pleasure therefore to be able to say, that next year he had every reason to hope that we should have the most formidable marine this country had ever sent to sea. He admitted, as the Noble Earl who spoke lately had observed, that the very active efforts made for recruiting the army, did somewhat cramp and embarrass the manning of the navy, and that extraordinary exertions were necessary to effect that important object. But if the country would consent to make those exertions, he had not the smallest doubt but that the object could be attained, as the country, he was persuaded, had the means, and sufficient resources to answer every exigency of the war. He declared he was satisfied that the rumours of the superiority of the French in the West Indies were unfounded, as he had every reason to believe that we had at this time a force in that quarter superior to that of the enemy. With regard to the French fleet appearing so formidably in the Channel, he could not speak with certainty on that point; Government had received some information respecting it, and had thought it necessary to take measures to prevent the danger, of which, perhaps, a premature alarm had been taken. As the Noble Earl who spoke early in the debate (Earl of Guildford), had stated the acquisition of Corsica to be a disaster, rather than an advantage to this country, and at the same time had alluded to the navy of England; it was astonishing to his mind, that, having the latter topic in his contemplation, he could possibly overlook the obvious benefits that must result to Great Britain, considered as a maritime power, from the capture of Corsica, and the great importance of its being in our possession. The Noble Earl had described it as almost inaccessible, with respect to its harbours. Was it nothing then to have possession of a port in the Mediterranean capable of receiving a large fleet, which was by natural circumstances and situation perfectly safe and secure? His Lordship slightly adverted to one or two other points, and then concluded with an apology to the House for  
having

having troubled them at all. He had endeavoured to say but little ; still, perhaps, he had said too much, considering his official situation. He was not much in the habit of addressing their Lordships, and possibly he might have let some word or phrase fall from him that was improper, of which he should, no doubt, hear notice taken in the course of the debate. All he could say in his own defence was, that in times like these he thought it became every man to speak his sentiments fairly and openly. The Noble Earl had set him the example, and he had endeavoured to follow it, by impartially delivering his opinion : If in giving it he had accidentally been guilty of any inadvertency or impropriety, he trusted to their Lordships' indulgence.

*The Marquis Townshend* begged leave to say a few words relative to the manning of the navy. He spoke highly of the marines as a most useful corps, and said, as they might easily be converted into able seamen from their nautical habits, he thought, whenever occasion pressed, that it would be politic so to use them, and to endeavour by bounties and other encouragements to recruit the marines, by which means the military and the marine service, connectedly considered, might be essentially benefited and increased at the same time. With respect to the internal defence of the country, his Lordship said, he was persuaded he might rely on the spirit and zeal of the kingdom. At least he could speak with confidence of the province over which he had the honour to preside as Lord Lieutenant. In Norfolk, he was confident, the gentlemen and yeomanry would readily turn out in the hour of danger, and defend their country, without bounty or premium of any kind whatsoever. With regard to the war, it was not possible, in his opinion, to put an end to it at present, without incurring national disgrace and national dishonour. Peace must be desirable to every man, and when it could be made with safety, he should be as eager as any one of their Lordships to press for its speedy conclusion ; but under the existing circumstances, it was not, in his humble opinion, either wise or dignified to urge ministers to attempt a negotiation, which could neither be carried on with advantage, nor concluded with such conditions as it became Great Britain to accede to. He should therefore vote for the Address.

*Lord Boringdon* said, that having intruded on their Lordships just before the close of the last Session, he was sorry to come forward again on their first meeting ; but the encouragement of their Lordships, when he had first addressed them, emboldened him to take the liberty a second time. The present, his Lordship said, was a period which called for the utmost exertion

exertion of the deliberative wisdom of Parliament, and that from the peculiar circumstances in which the country was situated, he trusted that moderation and unanimity would mark the conduct of their Lordships collectively, and that individually they would come forward with their sentiments without prejudice or disguise; he said this was due from them to the country, from the very great confidence, deference, and wisdom, with which all descriptions of persons had awaited, and did still await, the deliberations and decisions of Parliament. His Lordship praised in the highest terms the determination to support the laws, the liberties, and the religion of the country, which had manifested itself amongst every class of inhabitants; he said the annals of our history did not present to us a period in which the spirit and dignity of the English character was more manifest than at present, or which afforded more room for just congratulation amongst Englishmen. He said, he, for one, should in no ways be inclined to rejoice in it if he considered it as likely to cause the renewal of any of those proceedings which had not hitherto been attended with success. He said, he did not conceive it calculated to justify the renewal of the attempt of marching to Paris, or as instigating us to pay further subsidies to the kings of Prussia, or Sardinia, or other princes, to make occasional incursions into the French provinces, which were contiguous to the then situation of their respective forces. Such measures were probably just and necessary at the time, but he did not think the war at present in a state to demand the repetition of them. He chiefly rejoiced in the present temper of the nation, inasmuch as it proved to France, to Europe, and to posterity, that England was determined never to submit to any plan of immoderate or dangerous aggrandizement on the part of France; and as he conceived it calculated infallibly to demonstrate to Europe and to the world, that if we were insulted, we would punish the insult; or if attacked, that we would repel the attackers. He said, this general and proper spirit on the part of the people, at the same time that it called upon Parliament to carry on the war with unabated vigour, and even additional energy, in case of necessity, in no ways bound them to a contumacious determination to reject every offer of peace, or to despise those means which were the most likely to procure it with safety. It was from a thorough conviction that the spirit and assurances contained in the Address, were most calculated, not to obtain a short moment of disgraceful inactivity, which the French might vainly think they imposed upon us, but to obtain a substantial and honourable peace, that he called upon their Lordships to support

port these assurances to his Majesty. He said it was such a peace as he had last described that it should be the great object to obtain; he said it was certainly his great object, and to which every thing he did, and every vote he gave, would to the best of his judgment be solely directed. His Lordship said, that, having expressed his extreme desire for peace, he could not but feel highly happy in the destruction of the barbarous and inhuman system of terror which had so long tyrannised over France, and which, at the same time that it must ever tarnish the name of that people, must be a general disgrace and reproach to the manners of the 18th century. He said the destruction of this system, and those principles of reason which appeared to be returning in that country, did lead him to entertain very lively hopes that ere long the French Government would acquire sufficient strength to hold out a reasonable security for any negotiation that might be concluded with it. In a time of such confessed difficulty and doubt, and where the wisest men were puzzled and confounded, his Lordship said that it must naturally be with great humility that he came forward to their Lordships with any positive opinion on the subject. He expressed his confidence in the integrity and wisdom of his Majesty's ministers, and doubted not they would earnestly endeavour to meet the public wishes, and make to cease any further effusion of human blood, the very first moment in which their information should lead them to imagine that it could be done with honour or safety. He concluded by pressing the House to come to an unanimous vote upon the Address; and said that he thought unanimity and moderation most powerfully calculated to raise the honour and reputation of this country, and to lower any supposed expectations of aggrandizement on the part of France.

*The Marquis of Lansdown* said, that, dreadful as the situation of the country was, it was some consolation to him, to feel that he had not contributed to place it there, but, on the contrary, that he had done every thing in his power to prevent it, and warn ministers of the extreme danger of the war: It was therefore no small satisfaction to him to recollect that, at the very commencement of it, in the early part of 1793, he had entered a Protest on their Lordships' Journals, in which he had predicted all the disasters that had happened; and, by the motion he had made last year, he had endeavoured to prevail on their Lordships to interpose their authority, and check the rash and mad career which ministers were running. His endeavours had been fruitless, the tide of popularity was against him, and, what he should ever feel with sincere pain and heart-

heartfelt regret, he feared the arguments he used, and the facts that he stated, had excited the displeasure and distrust of their Lordships themselves. But he knew at the moment, that ample justice would one day or other be done to him, and to those Noble Lords who had voted with him; and he was sure that the time was not far distant. Indeed it was astonishing to his mind, that it ever should have been imagined, that any thing but a sense of public duty and public danger could have collected and united a set of Noble Lords, not in the habits of intimacy, not having the same views, nor at all likely to have come forward and join in opposing the measures of ministers, under any other circumstances, than the very extraordinary ones that had marked the conduct of Government for the last two or three years. Noble Lords, with some of the greatest property in the kingdom, and all of them with large fortunes!—how idle to suppose that men with so much at stake, would come forward and risk the ruin of themselves and their families, by opposing a war, which had been delusively held out by ministers as the only means to secure and preserve the liberties and property of the country!

He wished to know where it was that they were now to look for safety, but in treating for peace? Let their Lordships examine facts, and see if they could discover in any thing that he held out, the smallest prospect of hope but that. They had been too long the dupes of declamation, of fine words, of flattery, and of pompous and polished periods, of splendid sounds which meant nothing. It was not enough to be told that this was the first country in the world, that our means are without end, and our resources inexhaustible. They must submit to a rigorous examination of the objects in view, and the means that they had to accomplish them. The Marquis declared, he had himself endeavoured to search the subject to the bottom, and to look at it in every possible aspect; but the result of his investigation was neither soothing nor satisfactory. If we turned our eyes to the military transactions of the war, did they reflect any thing that could afford comfort, or dispel for a single moment the melancholy gloom that surrounded? It had been said, that we had raised the finest army that ever was seen in any war. If it were true, what a libel upon ministers! What became of these armies? They were to be seen nowhere;—they were most of them gone to God, and were no longer to be found among men. They had been squandered, sent here and there without plan, without co-operation or principle, and were at this moment almost extinguished. Look at every corner of the earth where our arms were to be found, and see the situation in which we were left. In the West

Indies, the situation was too melancholy to reflect on it. Guadaloupe was known to be lost; the two great officers, by whose unparalleled efforts we had been so successful, were in themselves hosts; but unsupported and abandoned as they had been, it was impossible for them to do every thing. It is said, if soldiers were wanting, there were plenty of seamen; but seamen cannot be seamen and soldiers too. The mortality natural to the climate ought to have been foreseen; and though it undoubtedly had been greater than in common seasons, yet there was no apology for the utter neglect in which those islands and those brave men had been left. But we were told by the Noble Earl, that probably we were by this time superior at sea. He was glad to hear this stated to their Lordships. Surely this was not of itself sufficient; for ships were not of themselves sufficient to the maintenance of the islands. But it was not here only that there had been neglect; even Corsica, the favourite child of ministers, had been equally abandoned, and at this moment was in a most perilous situation. Though 100,000 men had been raised and sent about here and there, we had been effective no-where. And how were our armies recruited?—By old men and boys! we had no other recruits. Our officers were children; our grenadiers invalids. We had an enormous army without force, and which melted away and became crippled, owing to the miserable principle upon which it was raised. On every side we saw boys in uniform, who had just quitted their Ovid's Metamorphoses, and were astonished to see themselves metamorphosed into captains and colonels. Comparisons, it was said, were odious; but common sense required that they should compare the figure that we had made in the last campaign with that which the French Republic had made. His Lordship said, he held in his hand a summary of the last campaign of the French, as stated by themselves: He would read it, because it was very short, and could not fail of producing its effect on the mind of their Lordships. It was as follows:

*Abstract of the Operations of the French Armies, in the Campaign  
of 1794.*

Twenty-three sieges successfully conducted.

Six pitched battles decisively won.

Two thousand eight hundred and three pieces of cannon taken.

Sixty thousand of the best troops of Europe compelled to surrender Prisoners of war, either by capitulation or in the field.

One hundred and forty-four towns and cities captured, among them many of the strongest fortresses in Europe.

The

The authenticity of this statement was undoubted and undeniable; it could be vindicated by the most scrupulous examination of facts, and the names of the places taken might be ascertained by a reference to the maps, which exhibit the different theatres of the war.

And this was independent of their late victories in Spain!—in Spain, which at this moment lay almost completely at their mercy. It was well known that there were but four founderies of cannon in Spain, two of which were in the hands of the French, and a third near Pampeluna had probably also fallen; and at this moment there was but one fortified town remaining in the hands of the Spanish Monarch—Barcelona. The whole of the rest of the Spanish kingdom was defenceless and exposed. If the French had been so strong and terrible when they had to combat with all the world, would they be less so when they shall have made a treaty with Holland, by which they would, under the aspect of neutrality, receive all manner of supplies through her active commercial spirit? Would they be less formidable, when Spain should be obliged to yield to them upon any conditions they should be pleased to dictate? He was afraid to look at the conditions they might impose, it was better suited for meditation than for discussion in that House! Would the French be more formidable, when they should have over-run Italy, a country enfeebled by the debasing consequences of a false government, and rendered totally incapable of defending itself? Were they rendered less likely to make head against us by the wonders they had performed on the banks of the Rhine, wonders which were enough to make one man two? Surely when Noble Lords seriously entered into the consideration of the comparative situation of the two countries, it was monstrous to hear it asserted that we might still hope to subdue the French by military force. The news brought that day was an additional argument against any such idea; he hoped to God it was not true! The frost was set in so as in all likelihood to make the Waal passable; and it was said, that the bridge at Arnheim had been carried away by the floating ice: If the fact were so, it was deeply to be deplored; our unhappy cavalry, and the army there, would be exposed to the utmost hazard. Under such circumstances, it was not very likely that the negotiation with Holland would go off; and this calamity, which his Majesty so feelingly deplored in his speech, was to be added to all the other disasters and defeats of the campaign. Let their Lordships look a little farther, and in the Diet of the Empire they might see that a great majority was for negotiating with France; Elector after Elector advocates for peace, Austria



Austria herself only endeavouring to gain time ! So that the Elector of Hanover was left in a feeble majority, distinguished for nothing but his violence in the system of war. Was it probable, after the sense of Germany had been so expressed, that they should be likely to exert themselves ; that they should rise in a mass to resist the torrent ; or that they should cordially co-operate against the enemy ? Had we been more successful in negotiating with our Allies ? Had we succeeded in uniting Prussia and Austria ? Those two Powers, it was well known, could not trust each other : Prussia, he verily believed, never had been in truth the enemy of France, and he could not be so. Those two Powers, from situation and circumstance, mutually and necessarily rivals, looked only to their private interests ; and who could blame them ? They each regarded their country with becoming feelings ; they were not their own enemies, and, not having a Parliament to stand between them and the people, their ministers were more careful of the advice which they gave to their masters, as the consequences must fall on their own heads. With these sentiments, it was not to be wondered that, however they had been brought to commence the unnatural league that Europe had witnessed in the course of the present war, they had never been serious and cordial friends in the contest ; and indeed it would not be difficult to prove that Prussia, who could only look for support from France against the power of his rival, had never seriously been the enemy of France, the dismemberment of which would have been so fatal to himself. Another and a most important point of view in which this political question was to be considered, was with regard to the resources. It was certainly pleasant to hear of 24 millions being raised in a morning ; but 24 millions added year after year, would of itself generate difficulty, notwithstanding the extravagant argument, that the larger the national debt, the greater the national wealth and powers of finance. He did not mean to cry down public credit ; credit was in its nature to do wonders while it lasted. They all knew that a merchant of thirty thousand pounds capital, could have more credit than a nobleman of an hereditary fortune to the same annual amount. He might circulate his paper for five or six hundred thousand pounds, and go on in that way for some time ; but it was not unusual for the bubble to burst, and a great merchant incur a statute of bankruptcy. He would not enter into the discussion of the wild theories about the nature of credit, by which they strove to delude themselves : They had originated in France under its old system, and yet France had not been saved. The truth was, we might go on in the same blind path without perceiving our danger,

danger, until we fell into the abyss to which it led. And what were the objections to treating with the French for peace? The first was too contemptible for a serious answer,—With whom could we treat in France? It was a question unworthy even of a German Diet. We certainly could find persons to treat with, if we had a disposition to seek them. A Noble Earl (Lord Mansfield) had asked last sessions, who would undertake the negotiation? and had thrown some ridicule on the supposed language to be held in such a treaty. He neither felt the force of the ridicule, nor saw the difficulty imagined by the Noble Earl. When persons are in want to make up a quarrel, the difficulty was done away as soon as it was understood that there was a cordial and a sincere desire for conciliation on both sides. Then any body might treat with ease and effect, or the parties settle it themselves. France, with all its changes of parties, and in the midst of its most violent commotions, the Marquis said, had not falsified its engagements since the Revolution with any one foreign state. The next reason that had been urged against treating was, the necessity and importance of preserving what had been termed our invaluable conquests. As to those invaluable conquests, one part of them, those in the West Indies, he was afraid, was likely not to stand in our way. The last accounts we had received from that quarter of the globe, rather tended to create apprehension of our being likely to lose them, than confidence of their preservation to this country. If the negligence of the French in sending out succours to those islands had not been equal to our own, in all probability the whole of those islands would be lost. His chief dependence on the safety of Martinique and the others rested on the accidental circumstance of Sir Charles Grey's continuance there to protect them. As to Corsica, our other great and *invaluable* conquest, the favourite of ministers, and according to their description a jewel that added lustre to the British Crown! he would state to their Lordships the account which M. Neckar, a man of unimpeached integrity, and great knowledge and talents, had given of that *rich* island; he would also read the account which another person of great eminence as a literary character had given of it, though, alas! he was a Democrat; it was just possible, however, for a Democrat to be a man of sense and integrity. The person that he alluded to was the celebrated M. Volney.

“ M. Neckar's account of Corsica is, that it contains 450 square leagues—124,000 souls—550,000 livres was the whole of the revenue, and 250,000 ducats were paid by the King, exclusive of troops and military expences, in addition to its own revenue.

M. Volney's account was still more curious. "It was quite in a savage state. The power in the hands of poor, greedy, ignorant heads of families. A system of mystery, concerted between them and the French, employed there to conceal and misrepresent every thing, lest the French should be disgusted, and abandon the possession. The French expenditure, independent of extraordinaries, was above ten times the revenues, which do not amount to 300,000 livres, which were three years in arrear, and diminished a third by the Council in 1790. The Custom-house does not do more than pay the officers. There were two Attorney Generals, two Director Generals, not one bookseller, not a printing-press, except one belonging to Government. The communications with the continent were so subject to interruption, as to prevent any for two months together. Voters attend the elections with swords, pistols, stilettos, &c."

The next thing, he was afraid, their Lordships would not comprehend :

"Votes are sold, and the price ascertained like merchandise !"

He was sure their Lordships would never be able to believe this, because they could have no conception of such a practice. But he would pursue M. Volney's account :

"Their Assembly of 400 persons was led by eight or ten chiefs, who form between themselves aristocratic leagues, who give and take reciprocally pensions and places, quarrel and make it up—*avec un mobilité & inconstance incroyable*—But the liberty of the many and French money pays the expence of the whole. There was no industry, not so much as a match to light a fire, which is not brought from Genoa or Leghorn. The country uninhabitable for want of safety. The farmers go to the plough armed. The culture sacrificed to beasts. A decided preference for France; but so incalculable is the Corsican nation, arrange every thing to-day, you will in a short moment find all that you have done amounts to nothing more than paying a military force, which will never be complete, will cost immensely without ever going out of the island, and will cease to be labourers, without ever becoming soldiers."

Such was the *invaluable* island of Corsica—that pride of ministers, that great acquisition on which they laid so much stress, as to hold it as a balance against the disasters of the campaign. If it had not been for this idle enterprise, we might have had the finest fleet that this country ever saw; we might have protected our commerce, guarded our coasts, given confidence to industry, and, instead of the abominable attempt

attempt to starve the French by intercepting their corn, we might have done what was consistent with legitimate war, endeavoured to starve them in another way, intercepted their naval stores, crippled their means of carrying on the war, and thus we might have saved the effusion of so much human blood. But then, undoubtedly, we should not have been able to have added half a dozen sinecures to the influence of the Crown, to be parcelled out among the men who were alarmed for the existence of the constitution.

There was, his Lordship said, a part of his Majesty's Speech which afforded him great pleasure—it was that in which his Majesty informed his Parliament that he had concluded a treaty of amity, commerce, and navigation, with the United States of America. He was heartily glad that ministers had acted so wisely in that respect as to remove all grounds of future jealousy and misunderstanding. He had no doubt but they had confirmed the demarcation of the boundary of the United States, as settled by the treaty of peace, and he gave them credit for having put their commerce to the West Indies on a less narrow and more liberal footing. Every concession of that kind tended to produce grounds of mutual conciliation and confidence; and the importance of preserving the friendship and esteem of America was too obvious to be overlooked by any persons who wished for a single moment to be considered as statesmen. Would they adopt the same policy respecting France, they would then be entitled to the gratitude of their country in the highest degree. He was not one of those, his Lordship said, who were of opinion that France would not treat with his Majesty's present ministers. Let ministers shew an inclination for peace, and he had no doubt France would manifest the same: The task might, possibly, be managed with greater ease by other men, and other men might be able to obtain better terms; but still ministers were competent, in his opinion, to close the breach they had so unfortunately opened, and continued to widen from the commencement of the war; they owed it to their fellow-subjects to heal the wound they had made, and restore the country to peace. It was generally imagined, and often believed, that no man opposed the measures of ministers, but he who was anxious to fill one of their places; he solemnly protested he had no such wish. He was not a man to force his services upon a Prince against his inclination; he held such conduct to be indecent in the highest degree, and altogether inconsistent with the character of a gentleman, and therefore he was personally out of the question, with respect to the advice that he had given. So far from thinking it for the advantage of any state

that its ministers should be frequently changed, it was a favourite opinion with him, that a country was likely to be best served, and its Government most wisely and beneficially administered, if the ministers were ministers for life, knowing at the same time that any disaster their country experienced from their unwise councils, their want of integrity, or their neglect, would be sure to bring down upon their heads an exemplary punishment. Amidst the reforms wanted, that appeared to him to be likely to prove most essentially serviceable, as he saw no benefit result to the country from the present frequent change of ministers. Let their professions, on coming into office, be what they might, the same inconsiderate measures were generally pursued, the same weakness and want of wisdom were manifest, and the same corrupt practices obtained.

The Marquis took occasion again to repeat that pretended difficulty to treat was a mere political bugbear, held up to frighten children, and alarm those who were incapable of thinking for themselves. Experienced men were not to be so easily deceived; they could not but know better. If ministers chose to treat, they might begin a negotiation as soon as they pleased. Let them but signify that such was their wish, and that their wish was sincere, he was satisfied they would be listened to; they had nothing to do but retract their error, confess their misconception of the character of the French, and declare, unreservedly, that, having formed a false judgment of the object of the Republic, they were willing to tread back the steps they had taken under their delusion, and to declare that the delusion, which had led them astray, was at an end. Nothing, the Marquis said, was more truly noble than to be ready to admit that, from the fallibility of human nature, men had adopted false notions of their neighbours, and acted imprudently in consequence. So far from such conduct being ignoble, he really thought it would appear manly and dignified in the eyes of all Europe, and, instead of degrading, would evince candour, and exalt the British name.

In the course of this speech the Marquis spoke in handsome terms of Earl Camden, whom he recognized as a friend he had long known and respected, and who had, he said, moved the Address with great ability, although he owned he could not subscribe to the reasoning with which the Noble Earl had supported the Answer to the King's Speech in many particulars.

Lord Lansdown concluded an interesting, and, in some points, an entertaining speech, with declaring that he should vote for the amendment moved by the Noble Earl near him.

Lord

*Lord Mulgrave* said, he should not have offered himself so soon to their Lordships' notice, or have trespassed upon their indulgence so immediately after he had received the honour of a seat in that House, had he not felt an irresistible impulse to endeavour to dissipate the terror, and relieve the public despondency, which might arise from the comprehensive description, given by the Noble Marquis, of the gigantic progress of the French arms in the last campaign. He was well aware that any arguments which he could use, would be feeble and ineffectual efforts to take off the impression which such a statement of facts must have made upon their Lordships' minds and upon the mind of the Public, if combated merely by arguments, and met only with speculative statements of the future effects of prospective efforts; it was therefore his intension to meet the facts, which had been just stated by the Noble Marquis, with historical events, more formidable by their rapidity, more gigantic in their extent, more awful during their existence, but, in their termination and effect, such as, he would venture to flatter himself, the winding up and conclusion of the present contest might be. For this purpose, his Lordship declared, he should content himself with recalling to the recollection of their Lordships some points of military history, which tended to prove (what, doubtless, had not escaped their Lordships' observation) that the nature and genius of the French nation had, in all wars, enabled them to over-run countries, and spread their conquests with a degree of rapidity calculated to astonish and dismay their adversaries; but that firmness, resistance, and perseverance, on the part of their enemies, had uniformly, and without exception, produced as speedy an evacuation of their conquests, and a total reverse of their rapid and short-lived fortune: And he trusted that he should do away the impression of the Noble Lord's statement, if he should keep the pledge which he then made to their Lordships, of proving, by historical facts, that in every war since the perfection of military discipline, and the establishment of the modern system of warfare, the French had made advances even more formidable than those stated by the Noble Marquis, and had, notwithstanding, in every instance met with greater reverses than the most sanguine supporters of the present war would venture to predict. He should not, his Lordship said, hesitate to go very far back in military history, but he was anxious to spare their Lordships' time, and to intrude as little as possible on their patience. Indeed the time which most naturally presented itself was that which was most analogous to the present period, namely, the irruption of Louis XIV.

into Holland in the year 1672, assisted by the combination of the greatest military talents in every branch of the profession that were ever united, and such as military history might perhaps never again produce, connected in one point, and directed to the same operations. When he had named to their Lordships Condé, Turenne, Luxembourg, and Vauban, they would, doubtless, feel with him that nothing of science could be added. Their instruments were 130,000 of the best disciplined and best appointed troops in Europe, a prodigious and unprecedented train of artillery, and an overflowing military chest, with which, perhaps, even more formidable attacks were made on the fidelity of the Dutch Governors, than the strength of their fortresses could suffer from the numerous and heavy batteries which were pointed against them. What in those days, he would ask, was the state of Holland? Were they, as at this time, covered by formidable and disciplined armies of veteran troops, commanded by experienced Generals, and animated by gallant, enterprising, zealous, and active Princes? No: Besides their ordinary garrison they had indeed a corps of 25,000 men; he could not call them soldiers, for they were composed of officers without emulation, and private men without energy. One young Prince, indeed, they had, of the age of 22 years (a Prince to whom this country owes great and, he hoped, lasting obligations; for he trusted that no struggle of factions, no efforts of external enemies, no stratagems of domestic traitors, could deprive us of the constitutional blessings preserved to us by that Prince). With such means of resistance opposed to such powers of attack, it was not, his Lordship observed, to be wondered at that the measure of success was equal to the disproportion of the powers of contest; accordingly the Rhine was passed without opposition (for, notwithstanding the boasts of national vanity, and the exaggerations of adulation, that celebrated achievement was merely the unresisted passage of a ford); all the places upon the Rhine, the Waal, and the IJssel, were surrendered; the conqueror, in his progress, received possession of Overijssel, Gueldres, Utrecht, and Naerden; nay, even the keys of Meuden, on which the security of Amsterdam and the fate of Holland depended, were for some awful minutes in the hands of a straggling party of the French dragoons. Factions and commotions existed within the walls of Amsterdam, which were not quelled without much struggle and bloodshed; yet did the energy and resolution of the Dutchmen of those days meet their danger with firmness, and bear their difficulties with patience. The great sluices were opened; the inundations

were

were such as to admit ships of war to float round the walls of Amsterdam for its defence; fresh water was sold at the rate of three-pence a pint: But what were the sufferings attending those efforts, when compared to the glorious and happy rewards of energy, perseverance, and courage? The progress of the French was not only stopped, but they were obliged to abandon their conquests, and evacuate the States with a precipitation far exceeding the rapidity of their former progress: Their retreat was so hurried that they could not even carry off their prisoners, eight and twenty thousand of whom were liberated at the rate of half a crown a man. The Dutchmen of this day have taken a different mode of averting the evils of French invasion, and have had recourse to negotiation to stop the progress of their powerful enemies; what the success of the experiment might be, remained yet to be proved; and it would, his Lordship declared, be painful to him to give way to prediction on the subject. But it was not irrelevant to the subject of debate, to remark to their Lordships, that the pursuits of the French government had not varied with its form; that the objects of the despotic Louis the XIVth, and of the present democratic tyranny of France, were the same; and that they equally looked to the Rhine as the natural boundary of their dominions, and purposed to make the territories which they should leave to the republic of Holland, beyond that river, subject to their direction and controul, and to be held at their mercy. "If," said his Lordship, "it should be argued that the present force of France is far superior to what I have stated to have followed Louis the XIVth, let us pursue the history: We shall find that monarch in 1688, with between four and five hundred thousand men under arms in his pay; we shall find that he took Philipsbourg, Mannheim, Heidelberg, Treves, Worms, Oppenheim, and Mayence; we shall find too, that before the end of the campaign he was driven from all these conquests by the Duke of Lorraine. That I may not tire out your Lordships' patience by minute details, I shall pass lightly over historical events, which, from their intrinsic glory, and their satisfactory and complete application to the drift of my argument, I could with pleasure enlarge upon; but I shall content myself with merely recalling them to your Lordships' recollection. In the Spanish succession war, after the first battle of Hockstedt, gained by Marechal Villars in 1703, Vienna was open to the march of the enemy, and so great was the panic in that capital, that it was debated in the council of the Emperor, whether he should not remove his person to some part of his dominions, more remote from the terror,



terror, and more secure from the danger of the French arms; the Emperor, however, did not give way to those pusillanimous councils; the events of war justified his decision, and rewarded his firmness. The battle of Blenheim, fought on the same spot in the subsequent year, by a glorious and immortal victory, decided the possession of one hundred leagues of country, the conquest of the electorate of Bavaria, and banded back that terror to the proud court of Versailles, which had so lately shaken the capital of Vienna. As Blenheim determined the fate of Germany, so two years afterwards did the victory of Ramilies decide the fate of Flanders. In the second succession war, when the ambition of France proposed the dismemberment of the hereditary dominions of the house of Austria, and the disposal of the Imperial crown of Germany, the energy of their incursions, and the torrent of their first efforts, carried them into the centre of Bohemia; gave them possession of Prague, the capital of that kingdom; all-powerful and uncontrouled, they gave an Emperor to Germany at Frankfort, by the *congé d'honneur* of their haughty, brilliant, and ostentatious ambassador: Yet without a single great battle, by successive checks, by the judicious conduct and steady perseverance of their enemies, they were driven from the Danube to the Rhine, and considered the escape of the garrison of Prague as a glorious achievement, or at least as a fortunate and creditable event. In later times, which are in the memory of some of your Lordships, in 1757, after the unfortunate battle of Hastenbeck, and the dispersion of the Duke of Cumberland's army by the convention of Closter-Seven, Hanover being at their mercy, troops were detached to reinforce Soubise, who penetrated into Saxony, and flattered himself with the destruction of the King of Prussia's monarchy; all these advantages were lost by the single battle of Rosbach, the French were again driven across the Rhine, Hanover delivered, and ultimately, after the most dreary and discouraging prospect at the commencement, the war was concluded with more glory and advantage to Great Britain, than any war in the annals of history. Having chosen rather to state my examples locally than chronologically, I shall now shortly advert to the other part of Europe, to which the Noble Marquis has alluded, and we shall find that in Italy the progress of the French arms has formerly been as great or greater than at present; and the tide of their success has been as suddenly and completely turned by a single action, as in any of the instances I have already recalled to your Lordships' recollection: It will be sufficient merely to say that, in the first succession war, when the French were, in

1706, in possession of Milan, Mantua, Naples, and Piedmont, the battle of Turin obliged them to abandon the whole of those territories, and totally to evacuate Italy: In the second succession war in 1743, the Prince of Conti penetrated through the Alps, possessed himself of all the strong posts on the side of Nice, passed the Col de Tende, forced the Passage of the Barricades, and laid siege to Coni on the borders of Piedmont; yet the single battle of Coni (though undecided as to victory) having relieved that fortress, the French were obliged to abandon all their conquests in the Alps, and repass the Rhine."—

But why, Lord Mulgrave asked, should he fatigue their Lordships with examples? He had, he trusted, already produced enough to convince their Lordships and the country that our situation, notwithstanding the ill successes we regretted, was not such as to create despondency, or even discouragement. Let it not be said that their Lordships' predecessors had made greater efforts, and exhibited more manly firmness, to maintain the succession of a Spanish King, or to preserve the inheritance of an Austrian Princess, than they could exert for the maintenance of their independence, for the support of the prosperity, and for the preservation of the glorious constitution of their country. The war which had been declared against us, was not an ordinary war, in which our enemies might be satisfied by the acquisition of a district of territory, by the slaughter of men, by the destruction of corps, or by the defeat of armies; it was a war for the annihilation of our laws, our liberties, our prosperity, our civilization, and our religion. When their Lordships enjoyed the blessings of our happy form of government, and felt the gratitude which every Englishman owed to his ancestors for the noble efforts by which they have preserved to us that peculiar happiness, which had so wonderfully for ages created envy without exciting imitation, let every one of their Lordships, at such times, anticipate the curses and reproaches with which he would be branded by his posterity, if, from motives of convenience or the impulse of timidity, he crouched for peace, and sued for mercy from an implacable enemy, at the expence of the political jurisprudence of the country, and of the existence of its constitution! "Let me not be told," said his Lordship, "that this is exaggeration, that the proposal of peace will not be so abject, that the consequences need not be so fatal. I have an authority beyond contradiction; I have the authority of the whole Government with which it is proposed to treat. We have heard the general abhorrence of the existence of the regal title; the implacable enmity to all Governments, with graduated orders of society; and the indispensable rights of nature,

nature, as held out at the commencement of the war; all made subservient to the one grand object of hatred to this country. *The violaters of the free and natural rights of navigation in the Scheldt*, are to be united to the navy of France; the absolute Monarch of Spain (the next, I believe in my conscience, in the rank of their detestation to this country, but in so remote a degree as to sink before their inveteracy to us), this King is to be joined to these votaries of equality; the enthusiasts of atheism are to unite with those Spaniards whom they have branded with bigotry, for the idle purpose of collecting a naval force which may fail to the Thames, and burn the new Carthage. Will it, on this, as on a former occasion, be said, that we quote the wild expressions of an heated individual?—As well might it be said, if the Address now proposed should be carried with the unanimity which I could wish, and which I think it deserves, that it is merely the sentiment of the two Noble Lords that moved it! No, my Lords, it will be the sentiment and opinion of this branch of the Legislature; and I rejoice that it will be so; because I think it breathes a spirit worthy of it. So in the Convention, the sentiment of destruction being equally worthy of their character and disposition, did they rise as one savage, and give a general yell of approbation, dignified, in their deliberate assembly, with (to them) the moderate term of *acclamation*. Let us therefore recollect, my Lords, that not only our lives, our laws, and our liberties are at stake, but even the national character of our posterity; for, if we shall once admit into this country French Republicans, with their present disposition and feelings,—if we should once admit the guillotine within our shores; when we shall have injured our eyes to sights of horror; steeled our hearts by acts of cruelty; embued our hands in blood; and debased our minds by tyranny and oppression; where will future ages look for the national character? How shall Englishmen again resume that ready benevolence, that gallant forbearance, that spirit of mercy and forgiveness, which so peculiarly characterises this high-spirited and humane race of men; who do not, however, derive those qualities from the soil we inhabit, and the climate we breathe in, but from the form of the government; where a rational and extensive liberty expands the mind and elevates the heart; whilst a mild, defined, and equal, but firm and steady government, gives checks to vice, and punishment to crimes. Such being what we have on the one hand to fear, and on the other to preserve, it would be our duty to struggle, though our calamities should have been greater, and our acquisitions less than they are. But our acquisitions I by no means view in the same light

as the Noble Marquis: Even *that* of *Corfica*, which seems most particularly the object of the Noble Lord's derision, appears to me an object of infinite importance. I certainly have been very much amused by the lively comments of the Noble Marquis, as well as by the ingenious descriptions given by the entertaining Democrat, whom he has called in to his assistance; but in hearing the most facetious historical jokes, it is impossible to prevent fact from occasionally interfering with the triumph of wit; and when I hear of the defects of this barren and unproductive island, overloaded with establishments, inhabited by men so encumbered with firelocks and spades, that they are neither foldiers nor farmers, with a decided preference to France, I cannot help recollecting that the French carried on a long, expensive, doubtful, and bloody warfare, to bring these coy Corficans to follow their decided preference; and for the acquisition of this expensive and worthless island. It naturally occurs, therefore, to me, that there remains behind some truth too solemn for a jest, which therefore had been omitted in the catalogue; but at length one sarcasm has led me to guess at some possible advantage, to be derived from the island, which might counterbalance all its defects. The Noble Marquis, either in the course of his own argument, or in the abstract which he read from the Democrat, mentions that "the communications with the Continent were so precarious, as to be sometimes interrupted for two months together"—this indeed is proof that it is not a possession for a King in an Opera, or a Fairy Tale; that it is not situated in a lake calculated for pleasant water-parties; but that, on the contrary, it is placed in the middle of a boisterous and stormy sea (which I have myself experienced the Mediterranean to be); and if so, let me ask the Noble Marquis, are there not ports in this island? will it not afford shelter for your men of war? protection to your merchant-ships? a rendezvous for your trade? and a facility to your commerce with that part of Europe?—Is it by revenue and cultivation alone, that the Noble Marquis, as a British statesman, estimates the value of possessions? What were the nett revenues of Minorca beyond the annual expence of that island?—I do not believe the Treasury of England was much enriched by the collection of revenue from the possession of Minorca, yet it has been considered by many able statesmen as an object of no trifling importance; and the people have, from some prejudice, regarded the loss of it as a ground of complaint and resentment.—Where is the fertility and territorial revenue of Gibraltar? yet when an hint only was dropped of putting it merely into discussion, on the negotiation of peace, after an unsuccessful war, the whole

nation seemed to shudder at the idea; it was soon felt that sacrifices must be made elsewhere, and that the advantages of that barren rock were not on any terms to be relinquished; and I do not believe, that any Noble Lord who supports the Amendment this night, would venture to sacrifice his hopes of popularity—(for hopes of popularity every public man must entertain in this country, where the people generally bestow it with judgment, and withdraw it with reluctance)—no one, I say, of those Noble Lords would sacrifice such hopes, by venturing to offer this barren rock as the price of peace, and the means of escaping from the danger they apprehend from the power and progress of the French.—The value of Corsica therefore, I conceive the Noble Marquis has estimated upon false grounds.”

Lord Mulgrave concluded a very able and argumentative speech, by observing that he had already detained their Lordships too long, or he should attempt to follow the Noble Marquis through the other parts of his speech; but as that would be done with better information, greater ability, and more effect, by others, he should content himself with saying, that he could see no grounds whatever, for agreeing to the Amendment moved. Had the Address been worded with less energy, and expressive of less firmness, he should have been tempted to move an amendment, that their Lordships might resist with the spirit and indignation becoming a British House of Parliament the insolent menaces thrown out by our enemies. As the Address, however, was sufficiently animated and explicit, his Lordship declared it met his hearty concurrence, and should have his warmest support.

*Earl Stanhope* said, he did not rise for the purpose of debating—the hour of debating he feared was gone by. Events spoke for themselves; and the disasters of this accursed war were the best answers to the arguments of those who still think proper to defend it, and recommend its continuance. The Noble Lord, who had just sat down, had talked a great deal of the battles in the reign of Louis the Fourteenth, and in the reign of Queen Anne; he had told their Lordships that a great deal depended on a single battle; and he did not despair of another Blenheim. So the noble Lord told them, in his letters, that he did not despair of keeping Toulon—let their Lordships ask themselves, did the noble Lord, or those he left behind him in command, keep Toulon? It was curious, the Earl said, to hear the doctrines of those who supported the war, and to compare their theory with their practice. A gentleman who had distinguished himself by the publication of his political Reflections (Mr. Burke) had maintained that the people had no right to change their constitution or their government; that it was handed

handed down to them by their ancestors, and they were bound to deliver it unimpaired to their posterity. If the doctrine were true, how did it accord with the conduct of Government respecting Corsica?—There the people had been not only allowed, but invited, to change their form of government completely; the people, or rather the rabble and *Sans Culottes* of Corsica, had put the crown of their kingdom on the head of George the Third. Their constitution had in it essential differences from ours, though under the same king. The doctrine was here prevalent, and asserted with the utmost confidence, that to form a complete and well-balanced Legislature, there must be two Houses to co-operate with the Crown. In Corsica this principle was abandoned, and there was but one House. It had been contended for here also, that there was a natural union between Church and State. This had been in like manner departed from in Corsica. There the King had nothing to do with religion. He knew not how the Reverend Bench would relish what he was about to say, but there were no Bishops in the House of Assembly in Corsica. The Noble Marquis, with whom he was always happy to agree, had given a curious description of the island. He had told their Lordships that the husbandmen went armed, and that the native inhabitants were little better than banditti—a precious collection of new subjects! On that day he had expected that ministers would have come forward, and stated some reasons, plausible at least, for the continuance of a war so calamitous, expensive, and ruinous, as the present had proved; but only one Noble Earl in office had ventured to stand up and afford the House any information on the subject, and that Noble Earl had fairly confessed, that he had been so short a time in office, that he knew very little of the matter. All the rest of his Majesty's ministers chose to preserve a fullen and obstinate secrecy; they deemed *Mum and Silence* to be the Order of the Day. Notwithstanding all that the Noble Lord who spoke last, had said, of another Rosbach, another Ramilies, and another Blenheim; such a happy event as the last of these, was, he believed, just as likely to take place in the present war, as the Address that had been moved and seconded, was likely to be carried unanimously. A Noble Marquis had talked of the gentlemen and yeomanry of Norfolk, who were ready to come out in the defence of their country, when danger pressed; and another Noble Lord had said, that he knew the people of England had the means of answering every exigency of the war. Why then did not the ministry use the means? Why did not they arm the people?—They would answer, that they had so far imitated France as to arm all whom they could rely on. That was not enough; they had not, like France, armed

the whole people, they had not armed the *Sans Culottes*, the lower orders of the people, and the most useful and most to be depended on in the hour of danger and difficulty. The Noble Earl who moved the Address, and other Noble Lords, had stated, as one reason, to prove the difficulty of making peace, the inveteracy of the French to the people of this country. The assertion was vague and unfounded. The French had no antipathy to the people of this island; they only detested Administration; they considered them as the authors of all the mischiefs and expence of the war; and it was idle to expect that they would make peace with the present ministers. His Lordship said, the time was perhaps approaching, when it would be wise to preserve eternal silence within those walls; he took therefore that opportunity of stating his sentiments, lest it should be thought that any thing had happened to induce him to alter those opinions, which he had before maintained, which he would continue to maintain as long as he lived, and with which he would die. He thought it necessary to say what he had stated, because he conceived he saw his country at the brink of a precipice, down which, ministers, from their ignorance, their weakness, and their wickedness, were about to plunge it. The Earl concluded with declaring that he should vote for the Amendment, because he heartily concurred in its object, and considered it to be well calculated to answer that object.

*The Marquis Townshend* rose again to say a word or two, upon the subject of arming the people in general. He spoke highly of the militia, which he owned was a favourite object with him, and which he always considered as the third establishment for national defence, the navy and army being the two first. The Marquis stated his reasons for thinking the Noble Earl's idea of arming all the people, dangerous and impracticable.

*The Earl of Mansfield* rose next, and said, that, considering the late hour of the night, he would endeavour to detain their Lordships as short a time as possible. Like other Noble Lords, his language respecting the war had been uniform and invariable from the commencement of the war to the present moment; and he should shew great inconsistency, if, under the present circumstances, he should give any other advice than for a vigorous prosecution of the war. He concurred entirely with the Noble Earl who moved the Address, that it would be disadvantageous and disgraceful, even were the national character and spirit sunk so low, and so degraded and humbled as to submit to crouch at the foot of France, elated with victory, and drunk with success, and sue for a peace. A peace granted under such circumstances

cumstances could never be permanent, safe, or honourable ; nor could it be expected to be obtained without such concessions on our part as it would ill become this country to make. The French, it was true, had made most astonishing efforts to carry on the war ; but it was obvious they could not be continued, and that, notwithstanding all their seizure of the property of the church, the nobles, and of individuals, and all their confiscations, they could not much longer bear the expence they had hitherto incurred. The comparative description of the resources of this country and France, which the Noble Mover of the Address had so ably detailed, was by no means overcharged, but faithful and correct. He said, he spoke from information to be depended on, when he stated, that the expence of carrying on the war during the last campaign, had cost France three milliards six hundred livres, which was equal to 144 millions sterling. They had no less than six milliards of assignats in circulation, equal to 240 millions, besides the quantity of forged assignats which defied all calculation, as the utmost nicety of examination had not been yet able accurately to distinguish the forged assignat from the true one, since the stamp of death had been taken off the assignats, and *terror* was no longer the *order of the day*. The currency of the forged was as common as the currency of the true ones ; the consequence was, they were sunk to such a state of depreciation, that for twenty-four livres in specie one hundred and twelve were given in assignats. The *forced* loan made last year, the French had themselves confessed was an extraordinary measure, which nothing but the exigency of their affairs could justify, and which could not be resorted to again. The suffering the law of the *maximum* to sink into disuse, as well as their abandonment of the enforcement of the currency of assignats, sufficiently spake their state of exhaustion. In fact, their revenue and their resources were equally at an end. With regard to provisions and corn, the whole country, the provinces as well as the capital, were in a state of the direst penury. Much had been said again and again on the subject of the war and its object. He recollected that in the last sessions ministers had been called upon to say in two words, what was the object of the war, when a Noble Secretary of State had said, he would answer the question with one word : "Security," security was its object. Security, the Earl said, must be obtained, or it would be to no purpose to make peace. A peace concluded without security to this country and its constitution, could only be a period of temporary and delusive repose, during which France would endeavour to recover her strength and recruit her exhausted resources, and when she found herself sufficiently recovered, would not fail to renew her



her attack on this country, this new Carthage, against which she had vowed eternal vengeance and perpetual resentment ! During a peace of that nature, would any man advise this country to disarm ? We should therefore bear all the expences of war without any of its probable advantages ; would it not be much wiser not to restrain the generous and gallant exertions of our soldiers and sailors, but to continue the war, till we could ensure a safe and honourable peace ? He adverted to the frequent changes of the rulers of the day in France, from the time that the Brissotines fell a sacrifice to the system of blood, which they had themselves assisted in establishing, down to the present moment, and asked how it was possible to treat with a government so unstable ? He personified the sort of embassy and the style of language, that would be held by any negotiator, who could be weak enough to become the missionary of a treaty of peace with France, fraught with such terms of abject humiliation, as the Noble Marquis had been pleased to recommend, shewing that both must be degrading to the individual and to the country in the highest degree, and that such dastardly conduct could only excite contempt abroad and shame at home : The consequence of which must be highly injurious to the interests and to the honour of the British nation.

Among a great variety of strong points enforced by his Lordship, the Earl observed, that want of steadiness had often been ascribed to this country as one of its leading foibles amidst many virtues : That our great deliverer, William the Third, had repeatedly said, this defect of the English character reminded him of what he had heard in his passage over from Holland, when the only cry of the seamen in a storm, was "*Steady, steady;*" and it was unfortunately true, that King William had but too much ground for this complaint of national instability throughout his reign, as well as the country had cause to complain of it in the subsequent reign of Queen Anne, when the wits and leading men in literature, of those days, were able to drive out the ministers whose counsels had shewn so much wisdom, and produce a change of system, so fatal to the interests of the country, that it materially affected all Europe, and was scarcely recovered from at the present day. His Lordship concluded a very able argument, with strongly recommending an unremitting attention to what might be deemed an old-fashioned prejudice, the preservation of the Balance of Power in Europe, and with declaring that he had no option under the present circumstances ; we must either prosecute the war with vigour, or consent to sink into a state of humiliation and disgrace, to which he flattered himself no British subject would either himself submit, or see his country degraded, while any thing like British spirit remained.

*The*

*The Earl of Lauderdale* said, he had come down to the House under great and anxious curiosity, to know what the arguments could be, which ministers would resort to in justification of a continuance of the war, a war attended during the last campaign with such a catalogue of disasters and defeats, as had never before been exampled in the same short space of time. Without the smallest prospect of a reverse of fortune, or a single ray of hope to dispel the gloom, that the late events had cast upon the face of every thinking man, ministers seemed madly determined to try the worst, and to make a desperate throw of the best interests of the country. In the speech that their Lordships had that day heard from the Throne, and in the Address that had been moved, there was only one paragraph which afforded him satisfaction, and on which he could unreservedly declare, that he gave it the most sincere concurrence. The passage to which he alluded, their Lordships would easily conceive could be no other than that relative to the approaching nuptials of his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, and the Princess Caroline. The many virtues of the illustrious character in question, the amiable qualifications of his Royal Parents, and the innumerable obligations which the country owed to them, and the House of Hanover, must necessarily endear them to the minds of all men, who preferred freedom to slavery. But calculated as the communication of such a happy event must be to inspire sentiments of joy and gratulation, it had not been unattended with alloy to his mind. Desirous of profiting by experience, and learning what steps his ancestors had taken on a similar occasion, he had, since he came down to the House, turned to the Journals, in order to see what was the language and the conduct held on the marriage of his Royal Highness's father and his illustrious consort, in the year 1761—a year made memorable by the events of the war then carrying on. Although success had crowned the efforts of our arms in every quarter of the globe, and the glory of the British character had been carried to the highest pitch, his Majesty in his speech from the throne thought it right to lament, that he was not enabled to congratulate his Parliament on the return of the blessings of peace. Let their Lordships recollect the period in which this sensible expression made a part of the King's speech, was in the career of triumph and of victory; when the pulse of national pride beat high, and the breast of every man in the country glowed with exultation at the rapidity of the conquests that the British arms had experienced. It was the father of the present minister who directed public affairs—he, the wisdom and vigour of whose councils and opinions had thrown so much lustre on the

the name of Englishmen, thought it wise in such a moment to remind the Parliament of the desirable blessings of peace! How different was the conduct of the son of that great minister! After having plunged the country wantonly and unnecessarily into a war, the most unfortunate of any that this kingdom had ever engaged in, he was not dismayed by repeated defeats, but rashly determined to persevere, and put the very existence of the nation to the hazard.

After pushing this argument to its utmost extent, the Earl said, that all they had heard that day in recommendation of the war, was nothing more than a repetition of the reasoning which they heard repeated so often, and which was actually worn threadbare. The same false accusations of the conduct of the French, the same complaint of the want of persons to treat with, the same declaration of instability in the government of France, had been brought up, and insisted on that day with as unusual earnestness, as if the topics were new, and had never been touched upon. A Noble Lord near him (Earl Mansfield), whom he should ever take the liberty of calling his Noble Friend, because no difference of opinion in politics should ever make him lose sight of that sincere respect and regard that he entertained for him; that Noble Earl had endeavoured to prove that the resources of France were nearly exhausted, and that those of this country were in a most prosperous state, and had used that argument against this country treating for peace. Almost in the same breath, he had contended that France was elated with success, and drunk with victory; and had therefore contended that this was the most unfit of all opportunities, for us to open a negotiation with a view to peace. It was too much, his Lordship said, for his Noble Friend to be allowed the advantage of both these opposite arguments. If the resources of this country were in a flourishing condition, and those of France in an opposite situation, he should imagine that of all others an advantageous opportunity for this country to negotiate in. With respect to the other argument, it was scarcely possible that France should bear itself so haughtily, if her situation in point of resource and finance was really so deplorable as his Noble Friend had described. Much had been said of the system of terror, and its successor of the present day, the system of moderation. Surely the prevalence of the latter was the most favourable to treaty, and the most likely to prove successful for negotiation. With regard to the assertions, that the French are actuated by a boundless ambition, it was not very apparent, when it was considered that they were in treaty with one power for peace, and had kept faith with the neutral powers with the utmost punctu-

punctuality and exactness. Nor could he think that the mode of treating the United Provinces, by the language which was held respecting them in the Speech, was the sort of language that became an ally, who had heretofore expressed such anxious wishes for their welfare, as to force their services upon them against their will, and to compel them to be obliged.

The Earl took notice of the late trials for treason, and appealed to the recollection of their Lordships, whether he and the other Noble Lords who held and maintained the same opinion that he did, respecting the war, had not repeatedly said it was a false alarm, that no treason was on foot, and that it would turn out a groundless apprehension. A British jury, after due discussion, and the most impartial and deliberate trial that perhaps ever was known in this country, had established the truth of this prediction by their verdict solemnly delivered. In fact, it was clear, from what passed, that ministers had nursed up sedition for a long time after they knew it was active, in the hopes it would grow into treason. It reminded him of an instance of summary justice stated in a work, the wit and humour of which had no doubt entertained every one of their Lordships at one time or other of their lives, and from the morality it contained, if read with attention, and properly judged of, they might all derive instruction and improvement. He meant the History of a Foundling, better known perhaps by the name of Fielding's Tom Jones. In one chapter of that admirable work they would find that Tom Jones, and his companion Partridge, took shelter in a barn, amidst a groupe of gypsies; that the king of the gypsies behaved uncommonly well to them, and that while he was feasting Jones in mind and body by his conversation and his viands, Partridge was discovered in a situation not to be described with a young gypsy. A large sum was in the first instance assessed on him by way of fine by the king of the gypsies; but on Jones's shewing that the fine infinitely exceeded the state of his finances, it was reduced considerably; and when he was in the act of tendering the sum ultimately fixed on to the injured husband, the king of the gypsies stopped his hand, and asked where the husband was while the offence was committed. Learning that he stood by and witnessed the proceeding, he stopped the hand of Jones, insisted that no compensation should be given, as the husband had witnessed his own shame without attempting to prevent it, and thus encouraged, or consented to what he complained of as an injury to his honour; and that therefore, so far from receiving reward, he should be deemed infamous, and wear the mark of infamy on his forehead for a month. In like manner, his Lordship said, he thought ministers ought to

Vol. I. II be

be branded with all the imputation that, in the mind of every reasonable man, belonged to those, who had evidently and undeniably stood by, and purposely nursed sedition into treason.

The Earl took notice of what had fallen from the Noble Lord at the head of the Admiralty. He said, the introduction of the Noble Earl's speech did him great honour. It corresponded with his character, and was readily given full credit to by him, and every Noble Lord, he had no doubt, who had the pleasure of knowing the plain but polite manners, and unaffected integrity, which had ever distinguished his Lordship through life: At the same time it appeared rather extraordinary to hear a first Lord of the Admiralty state to the House that he *hoped* our naval force would in the ensuing year prove larger than was ever before known, and that if the French fleet were in the chops of the Channel, it was unknown to the Admiralty Board till it was casually communicated. The large supply so cheerfully voted for the support of that favourite branch of the public service, entitled the people of England to expect that a very formidable force, superior to that of the enemy, would be at sea early; and it looked but little like the necessary vigilance, which the Admiralty should manifest on every occasion during a war, and the information they should at all times have at command, if the enemy were suffered to send a powerful fleet into the chops of the Channel without their knowledge, that such an important event was even in their contemplation. He said, as the Noble Earl had asserted that in all probability our marine force in the West Indies was superior to that of France, he was willing to imagine that it was so; but still he thought there was serious ground for complaint that a larger land force had not been sent with Sir Charles Grey, which might have prevented the disasters that had befallen us in that quarter of the globe, subsequent to the capture of Guadaloupe. He spoke of the fruitless subsidies that ministers had paid to Prussia, and mentioned the loan raised in London for the Emperor, the whole of which he said had been obtained, merely because the minister chose to pledge the credit of the country as a guarantee and security to those who advanced the principal. The ease with which the loan was made, was, he contended, imputable solely to the circumstance of the minister's having pledged the country as a collateral security, because, when the Emperor's agents in London solicited a loan at a great interest, but on his single security, no prudent men would come forward to countenance it. As the Noble Earl, according to report, had been personally concerned in negotiating with the Emperor, he possibly might be able to give their Lordships some information, that would throw light on that transaction. After

After adverting to a great number of the subjects, that have of late agitated the public mind, his Lordship concluded with declaring, that he not only thought peace obtainable, but that it ought to be endeavoured to be obtained; and, with a view to smooth the path to it, he should vote for the amendment.

*Earl Spencer* rose to explain. His Lordship said, certain passages of the Noble Earl's speech came so directly personal to him, that he hoped the House would excuse his trespassing again on their patience. In what he had before said, he had so far guarded himself as to declare, that he had so recently come into the office in which he at present was placed, that he could not venture to speak with accuracy of the state of our marine. He had expressed his belief, that our force in the West Indies was superior to that of the enemy; he had every reason to believe it was. He had also said, that he hoped our fleets next year would appear more formidable than the country had ever before seen; these hopes were not lightly adopted, nor ascertained on slight foundations: They rested on rational grounds; and if the country would consent to, and support the necessary exertions for manning the navy, he had little doubt of their being amply realized. With respect to the negotiations with the Emperor, in which he had taken a public part, he was persuaded the Noble Earl knew too well the nature and necessary secrecy of all matters of foreign embassy, to expect him to say a word on the subject.

*Lord Grenville* made one of the most able, but most elaborate, speeches we ever listened to. He began with noticing what Earl Stanhope had said of the sullen silence of ministers, and their obstinate perseverance in making *Mum* the order of the day. So far from it, he said, he should have held himself unpardonable if, in a moment of the greatest magnitude, and under circumstances perhaps the most critical that this country had ever known, he did not fully and fairly communicate his sentiments to the House on the arduous state of affairs in the most unreserved, serious, and solemn manner. A Noble Earl, who had lately spoken, had begun his speech with a comparison of the language delivered from the Throne in 1761, when his present Majesty's marriage was first announced to Parliament, with the language which their Lordships had all heard from the Throne that day. It was matter of surprise to him, that the Noble Earl, who so well knew how to distinguish between the leading features of different transactions, had happened to pay no sort of attention to the very different circumstances under which the two speeches were delivered. In 1761 we were in the midst of a war, crowned with unexampled success; that unfortunately was not our

case at present. The objects of his Majesty's Speech from the Throne to his Parliament, were consequently different, and necessarily demanded a very different mode of expression. One of the most essential points to be adverted to by the House, in order to enable them to form a correct and a just judgment on the propriety of the Address, his Lordship said, was the history of the last campaign, and the extraordinary events which the chance of war occasionally, and sometimes unexpectedly produced, as a Noble Friend of his (Lord Mulgrave), who had made the most brilliant first appearance in that House that perhaps ever was remembered, had that day so ably and so eloquently shewn by his compact but comprehensive statement of the memorable battles in Holland, Germany, and Flanders, on the issue of which, the fate of empires had depended, and which had governed the conduct of some of the most powerful princes and states that had at any period been recognized by history. The next great question for their Lordships' consideration was that which his Noble Friend, the mover of the Address, had so ably enforced, and which had been stated so correctly by another of his Noble Friends (Earl of Mansfield), who had entered into that part of his argument with that precision which could only be surpassed by the masterly style of reasoning, and superior eloquence, that dignified all his speeches in Parliament. Their Lordships would easily perceive that he adverted here to the different comparative state of the resources, and the internal situation of Great Britain and France; a situation which, when duly weighed and deliberately considered, must convey the most solid satisfaction to the mind of every man who had the cause of his country at heart, and who sincerely wished that it might see a speedy and an honourable termination to the present difficulties. His Lordship, to elucidate this part of his argument, entered into a minute and circumstantial detail of the circumstances attending the circulation of assignats, and the expenditure of the French during the past year. He quoted the public proceedings of the Convention, their reports and authentic documents, as his vouchers, and said the subject was easy to be understood, that it was neither complicated nor puzzling, but lay within the reach of ten minutes' application to the papers in question. From such authorities he proved, that the expenditure of the French in the two last years, was, at the lowest calculation, equal to 160 millions sterling per annum. He appealed to their Lordships on the probability of France being able to go on with a war, that cost them such an enormous expence. He adverted to the alteration that had taken place in the temper of the French rulers. The system of terror was at an end, and

and there was an essential change in the constitution of the Committee of Safety, which tended to enfeeble its proceedings and unnerve its resolutions. The law of the *maximum* and for the enforcement of the circulation of assignats being no longer in effect, the price of provisions had risen enormously, and every thing in the interior of France presented an appearance of abject penury, and approaching bankruptcy. On the other hand, how much more consolatory was the prospect of our own situation!—Our resources ample, in full credit, and capable of making the most vigorous exertions. After dwelling for a considerable time on these topics, his Lordship suggested the impolicy as well as the disgrace of this country humbling herself to France under such circumstances; and threadbare as the question was, he must still ask those who were so anxious for a premature peace, with whom were we to treat and to negotiate? At the beginning of the war, ministers were recommended to treat with Brissot, who was described as possessing all the power of the government of France, and as having the whole mass of the people at his nod. Soon afterwards Brissot was led to the scaffold. Last year they were told that they might safely treat with Robespierre and his accomplices. They answered, that they would soon pass away, as others had done before them. That prediction, their Lordships well knew, had been fully verified, and so had every one of the predictions that they had ventured to make. After expatiating for a full hour on the state of France, and the impracticable and hopeless idea of treating for peace under the present circumstances (observing, that if a peace was made, we could not venture to disarm, and had therefore better employ our seamen and soldiers in the generous exertions of war), as well as the disgrace that must attend so fruitless an attempt, his Lordship ended his speech with an animated address to the characteristic spirit of Englishmen, which had always risen highest, and inspired them with the greatest ardour, in the hour of difficulty and danger.

*The Duke of Leeds* rose, he said, to perform an act of duty which was extremely unpleasant to himself to discharge, to deliver his sincere sentiments on the critical and arduous situation of public affairs. At first he had thought, that, feeling as he did, it would be right for him not to trouble their Lordships with his opinion; but on better consideration, he was satisfied that it would be more respectful to their Lordships, and more consonant to his own character, to open his mind, and communicate his sentiments freely. It always was painful to himself, his Grace said, when he could not give his Majesty's ministers what was termed *direct* support—but worded as the Address was, there was a passage in it to which he could not give his consent. Although it had been said, that



tion, as he did, from the First Lord of the Admiralty, that *exertions were making* in that department, on which the hopes of this country chiefly depended. The candour with which these were announced, left on his mind no doubt of the fact, and he was willing to confide in the vigilance of the Noble Earl for speedily realizing the expectations he had raised. He perceived much eagerness on one side of the House to mistake the case, by depreciating the loss, and magnifying the gain of the war. He thought the calculation very easy and simple. The one was just as real as the other was chimerical. The public mind was at that moment in suspense about the fate of our West India islands: And Corsica, which had attached so much contempt and ridicule to his Majesty's councils, he apprehended, instead of an advantage, might become a very serious misfortune. It was at least such a jewel as tarnished, but never could increase, the splendour of the British crown.

The statement that had been given by several Noble Lords, of the enemy's finances, he did not think satisfactory. It involved on the very face of it a palpable contradiction. Year after year ministers had boldly affirmed, that the enemy would not be able to support another campaign. Every succeeding campaign had notwithstanding been more efficient, both in its provisions and operations, than the preceding one; and their Lordships knew to their cost, that the last had excelled them all, was more amply supplied, and did more execution. The argument on which so much stress had been laid, that the deficiency of the enemy's resources appeared from their immense outgoings, he thought an absurd one. He did not credit the premises; and though he had, they warranted quite an opposite conclusion. The Noble Secretary (Lord Grenville) said, their expenditure last campaign amounted to *one hundred and sixty millions sterling*. He doubted the assertion, as it was accompanied by no authentic document. Admitting it however to be correct, it only proved either that ministers have been uniformly out in their calculations, or that a system of imposition on their Lordships, and the Public, was regularly pursued.

What did their Lordships think of measures which could only be supported by hypothetical reasoning thus equivocal and fallacious? What consolation could their Lordships derive from our miserable speculations on the resources of a people whose armies kept the field, which we and our allies constantly abandoned, broke and dispersed the most formidable confederacy that ever threatened the liberties of the world; reduced them, whose safety furnished us with the original pretext of taking part in the quarrel, to the direful necessity of treacherously

treacherously exposing our impotence, and leaving us the victims of an enemy primarily provoked on their account, and even now produce such a fleet as insults us on our own element, shuts up our ports, cripples our trade, and alarms our coasts? These are such indications of imbecility, as make Europe shake to its basis. And what have ministers yet in reserve to make us longer reject the evidence of our senses, to protract the triumph of their pitiful delusions, or keep up the spirit of insatiation, so industriously propagated among our countrymen, in the teeth of facts thus awfully convincing?

It certainly surprised him to hear the Noble Secretary pique himself on the foresight of his Majesty's ministers, who had been literally mistaken in almost every surmise they had hazarded. The state of things for some time past had been sufficiently fertile of predictions, both from ministers and their opponents. But with the single exception of repealing the law of the *maximum*, which he acknowledged ministers foretold, which, of all their other conjectures, had not been completely falsified by the whole course of succeeding events? Did not this shew how unequal they were to their situations, who had not the faculty of making such an estimate of the present as enabled them to provide for the future? It was this incapacity that shackled and enervated all the operations of the country, and left us invariably unprepared for every emergency. He challenged their Lordships, on the other hand, to produce one instance in which those he had the honour of acting with, had been mistaken. Were not all their predictions as minutely verified, as those of ministers had failed? And he appealed to their Lordships' candour, whether the foresight of the one side or other was most to be depended on, or best merited their Lordships' confidence? All that had been said about the difficulty of treating, he conceived to be nothing more than pretence. It was every way as easy to negotiate with France as any other state. That country, notwithstanding all its recent convulsions, did not seem more incident to a change in its rulers than its neighbours. The ministry of none could be permanent, and there was an end of all treaties, if that was to be a condition which could never happen. But what did nations chiefly regard as the mutual basis of confidence in their conditions? Not surely the precarious circumstance of vicissitude in cabinets, the intrigues of courtiers, or the narrow and crooked policy of favourite statesmen; but the prevailing temper and genius of the people. And he did not expect to be now told, that though Tallien and his friends should perish to-morrow by the same

fate which overwhelmed the party of Robespierre, the French could be at any loss for leaders.

There was nothing, as he perceived, in the Speech, that in the smallest measure determined what the object of the war really was, or at what stage of it, any hopes were to be indulged of peace. Had ministers specified distinctly what their views actually were, or shewn to his conviction, that they aimed at nothing unjust or unreasonable, he would have been the last in the House to oppose it, he would have given it his hearty approbation, he would have strained every nerve in every way Providence put in his power to promote and facilitate their measures. But when called to support a war of mutual destruction, and of which he saw no end but in crushing or annihilating one or other of the parties, he had no option but to grapple for his own safety, as well and as long as he could, and that, he was decidedly convinced, was only to be obtained by the means recommended in the amendment. He agreed with ministers, that it was a bad time for making peace, and added, that from them such a proposition could never come with a good grace. But what then? The Public could never sanction an eternal state of hostility. And in all wars one of the parties must be foiled. This, he was sorry to observe, was now our misfortune, and it became us to bear it with as much magnanimity as we could. But he could never think it any indignity, in nations more than individuals, for the weak to yield to the strong; and earnestly deprecated the madness of obstinately persisting against a force so eminently superior, though fainting under accumulated burdens and losses, and hardly able to meet the enemy anywhere, in the desperate presumption that by some miraculous interposition, or unforeseen but favourable accident, we may yet succeed.

It was suggested, that, in the event of peace, the country would be over-run with Frenchmen, who might insidiously undermine the present order of things, and effect among us a revolution similar to their own. He knew not whether this strange insinuation was meant as a libel on the constitution, or the people, but he felt it equally disrespectful to both. The laws of the country were not so easily perverted as ministers imagined, and he thought their justice and impartiality perfectly competent to their own preservation. And who doubted but the principles of Englishmen would always be proof enough against the influence of foreign artifice? What was the plain and obvious drift of this affected apprehension, but that such refugees and strangers as might attempt to dis-

fuse

base disloyal notions in the public mind, were certain to succeed, notwithstanding the general and deep-rooted contempt in which it was so natural for our countrymen to regard them? Were Britons then so perfectly weak and credulous as to become the dupes of those whom they were accustomed to consider as the most despicable on the face of the earth? Whatever might be the opinion of ministers, who probably were in the habit of depreciating and vilifying the good-natured people of England in proportion to their own facility and success in deceiving them, he entertained a better opinion both of their hearts and heads, as he never could reconcile it with common sense, that even the lowest orders among us could be in any danger from the communications of foreigners, of whose language they were ignorant, whose habits they disliked, and both of whom were so mutually repulsive to each other, as seldom, even on the most ordinary occasions, ever to associate.

The Noble Secretary of State had said, we ought to follow up with vigour, the *generous* exertions of war in which the country was engaged. He was at a loss how to construe this odd phraseology: It put him in mind of that jumble by which some poets of antiquity confounded the elements of things. There was, at least, no association or affinity between the ideas he had thus put together. He thought it an easy matter for ministers and statesmen to devise at their leisure the means of supporting what they were pleased to call *generous exertions*, not with their own, but the riches and blood of a gallant and unsuspecting Public. They knew nothing of the distresses it occasioned among those who immediately felt its pressures, of being violently torn from their families, or of leaving them destitute and miserable, and of having all the cruelties, hardships, and horrors of a military life imposed upon them, instead of the quiet domestic habits in which they were born and bred. To these direful extremities, thousands of their fellow-creatures are daily consigned by their order. They prescribe the duty, but others must set the example. All the difficulty or inconvenience which falls upon them is, to make out a plausible case for public inspection, or make the best apology they can when their conduct is censured or arraigned. But was not this being *generous* at the expence of others, wantonly sporting with the lives of others, and a liberality in the effusion of blood not their own? He would, however, venture to assure them, that, for such generous exertions as these, they would not have the blessing of the widow, or the fatherless; the approbation of their own hearts, or that of any thinking, sober, or good mind.

He could not help taking notice how differently ministers now spoke from their former manner of expressing themselves in that House. Their Lordships heard no more of that high-sounding language affected on the commencement of last campaign. Ministers, as it was shrewdly suggested they would, were now compelled to lower their tone. He hoped, whatever events might occur, they would not soon forget how much they had been humbled. And he pledged himself, that if ever they did break out again, he should take the liberty of calling on his Noble Friends [looking at some Opposition Lords who sat near him] to be their remembrancers, and to put them in mind of their present embarrassment. It was what he presumed ought to teach them moderation and decency as long as they lived.

Their Lordships, he said, were now particularly called to observe, that in the very crisis of so general a desertion among our allies, ministers betrayed a more than ordinary propensity for prosecuting a project, which none in the world deemed practicable but themselves. They probably blushed to be longer found in a company they had but lately been so solicitous to join. In truth, there was but little credit accruing from such associates. Their Lordships needed but cast their eyes to Poland, to be convinced their tenderest mercies are horrid cruelty. There, scenes of barbarity had been recently acted enough to make every person of the least humanity shudder, as were never preceded by any occurrence either seen or heard of in the history of the world; even still more black and atrocious than the succession of bloody tragedies which distinguished the flagitious and sanguinary usurpation of Robespierre. Their Lordships would be surprised and shocked to be told, that these horrid excesses were committed under the pretext of supporting religion, society, and regular government. They would wonder still more when they understood that they were sanctioned by the consent of states in alliance with ours, and they could not but feel indignant that any part of our revenue should be appropriated or prostituted, only by report, in abetting and aiding a contest which merits the execration and abhorrence of all mankind.

*Lord Darnley* reminded their Lordships, that he had taken the liberty of delivering his sentiments on the subject of the war on the first day of the last Session. He then said, he thought the war just and necessary, and he was still of opinion that it ought to be prosecuted with the utmost energy and vigour; and that after an unfortunate campaign it was not a favourable opportunity for treating with a view to peace, even if there were a regular governing power in France to treat with, which

which obviously was not the case at present. For these reasons he would vote for the Address; and he must say, that he was of opinion that the Noble Duke [Leeds] misconceived the passage of which he had complained, as he did not think it meant that this country was not to treat with France while she continued a Republic; but merely that the present circumstances were unpropitious to negotiation. With regard to the system of the war, he agreed with the Noble Marquis, that, if the system was not adapted to the nature of the case, it ought to be amended; and he had no doubt but it would be amended.

*Lord Grenville* rose to take notice only of two matters alluded to by two Noble Dukes, which he conceived required a single word of explanation. He did assure his Noble Friend near him (the Duke of Leeds), that the passage in the Speech, to which he had objected, was not intended to convey the meaning which he had conceived it imported, *viz.* that Great Britain was by those words pledged never to make peace with France while she continued a Republic: Nor had any part of his argument that day warranted the conclusion drawn from it by the Noble Duke who had spoken lately; or that by fair construction it could be considered as amounting to a declaration, that his Majesty's ministers were determined not to make peace with the French under any circumstances.

The question was put on the Amendment, when the House divided:

<i>Contents</i>	-	12
<i>Not Contents</i>	95	
<i>Proxies</i>	12	
	-	107

The Address was then agreed to.

The House having adjourned during pleasure, in order to shape the motion into the form of an Address; as soon as it was resumed, and the Address reported, it was ordered to be presented to his Majesty in the usual form.

*Earl Stanhope* then rose, and said, as he had observed much difference of opinion respecting the obtainment of peace, in the course of the debate, which induced him to believe that many of their Lordships were sincere well-wishers for that object; in order therefore to smooth the way, he desired to give notice of a motion which he would bring forward on Friday; and as in the course of the last session he had been told from the Woolfack, that when any Noble Lord gave notice of his intention to make a motion on a future day, it was expected that he should state the object of it; he would inform  
their

their Lordships, that his motion would be to the following purport :

“ That this country has no right to interfere in the internal government, or with the constitution, of France.”

*The Lord Chancellor* told his Lordship, that as there was no business before the House, it was the intention to adjourn to Tuesday.

*Earl Stanhope* said, he must insist upon his day, as he had mentioned Friday to several Noble Lords who had left the House.

On the question being about to be put, *Lord Grenville* moved, by way of amendment, to leave out the word “ Friday,” and insert the word “ Tuesday,” which being carried, the Lords were ordered to be summoned for Tuesday.

The following are the Names of the Peers who voted for the Amendment to the Address.

Duke of Bedford	Earl Stanhope	Earl of Albemarle
Marquis of Lansdown	Earl of Thanet	Earl of Guildford
Earl of Derby	Earl of Buckinghamshire	Earl of Suffolk
Earl of Tankerville	Earl of Egmont	Lord Chedworth

The next day (Wednesday, Dec. 31) the Lords presented their Address to his Majesty at St. James's ; to which his Majesty was pleased to return the following most gracious Answer :

“ *My Lords,*

“ I thank you for this very loyal and dutiful Address, and particularly for your congratulations to me on the approaching marriage of my son the Prince of Wales.

“ The expressions of your zeal for the honour of my crown, and for the prosperity and safety of my people, and your assurances of concurrence and support in that line of conduct from which alone, in the actual situation of affairs, we can derive either present security, or future tranquillity, cannot but be highly satisfactory to me. The firmness and perseverance of Parliament, and the spirit and energy of my people, will, I doubt not, lead to a prosperous and successful termination of this great contest.”

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## HOUSE OF COMMONS.

TUESDAY, Dec. 30.

*The Speaker*, as usual, was summoned, as soon as the King was seated on the throne in the House of Peers, to attend his Majesty, with the House of Commons ; and after hearing the King's Speech on opening the Parliament, returned, disrobed, and

and having taken the chair, stated to the House the several writs that, in pursuance of his legal authority, he had caused to be issued for the election of Burgesses, &c. to fill the seats vacated during the recess.

Several new members were sworn in, and took their places.

The Speaker then, according to usual custom, held up the "Bill for the prosecuting of Clandestine Outlawries;" and proceeding to read it for the first time, was opening the breviary for that purpose, when he put the question, "That this Bill be now read."

*Mr. Sheridan* immediately rose, and said, he was sorry to present himself to the Chair at that unusual moment, but particular circumstances made it absolutely necessary. He was compelled to state some objections to a proceeding which had commonly passed without any observation—he meant the question then before the House, *viz.* Whether "the Bill to prevent Clandestine Outlawries be now read?" He objected to putting that question upon this ground: It had been the uniform practice of the House to read that Bill on the opening of every Session of Parliament, before they proceeded to take his Majesty's Speech into consideration; this he understood to be a custom for the purpose of expressing the right of the House of Commons to proceed to any business that they thought proper, previous to taking into consideration the Speech from the Throne. He thought this right not an useless, barren trifle, but a right to be insisted upon upon necessary occasions for any practical good purpose.—He conceived the opportunity was come for asserting that right, and this he did by way of enforcing the principle in the strongest manner possible. With that view, he must object in form to the reading of the Bill proposed to be read, in order to introduce a motion upon another subject. They were called upon seriously to advise his Majesty, in a time the most extraordinary, in a situation the most critical and alarming, upon a subject of the utmost importance to this country at large, as well as to every member of that House; and, before they could say they were in a proper situation to give fit advice to his Majesty, in a free, fair, and impartial manner, it was essentially necessary that they should themselves be free, which could not with any colour of reason be said to be the case while the *Habeas Corpus Act* remained suspended. His object therefore was, after this question was negatived, to move for leave to bring in a Bill to repeal the Act of the last Session of Parliament, which suspended the *Habeas Corpus Act*. He was confident there could be no objection from ministers to this mode of proceeding, unless they would assert, that there does exist at this moment



moment the same paramount necessity as that on which they grounded the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act; thereby depriving every Englishman of a right which is most dear to him. If he was told, that the Bill which he now wished to repeal had but a very short time to run; or, if he should be told it was not intended to be renewed; he would answer, that he would not suffer such a Bill to die a natural death; that he would not wait a month, a week, a day, or a single moment, after the meeting of Parliament, without calling on that House to act as independent, fair, honourable, and free agents for the Public; but would defend those rights of the People which had been invaded by ministers, but which rights, the People, if fairly left to the exercise of them, would never abuse. He concluded with saying, that, unless the House should testify a disinclination to the measure, he should move for leave to bring in "a Bill, to repeal the Act of the last Session of Parliament for suspending the *Habeas Corpus* Act."

Mr. Secretary Dundas objected to this mode of proceeding; he said, that with regard to the Bill for the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act, the House would have a future opportunity of considering that point; all that ought regularly to be said now, was, that it was a point not so clear as the Honourable Gentleman affected to state it; but was one which would require much consideration of the House. He was ready however to declare, there did not appear to him any reason for altering his opinion upon that subject; and unless he heard very strong reasons to the contrary, he should continue to be of opinion, that the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act ought to remain, and even to be renewed. At any rate, he must object to any further discussion of that subject at present, because the discussion was premature.

Mr. Fehyl said, he had felt satisfaction from what he had heard, for it gave him information on a very material point, that the ministers had made up their minds for the renewal of the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act. He expected from the candour of the Right Honourable Gentleman who spoke last, that he should not have insisted now on the propriety of continuing the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act without assigning some reason for it. The object was, that the House should not continue shackled; but by continuing this Bill it was as much as telling the House, You shall not be unbound, you shall not be unfettered, you shall not be entitled to think until February next. Good God! were the House to feel themselves respected by such conduct? He feared they were not, by this and some other conduct in which ministers bore a considerable part. This led him to think on many events, and

and particularly on those of the late trials for High Treason. There never was a time which called for strict inquiry into the conduct of ministers more than the present did. The House had, on the suggestion of certain persons, declared there existed a plot in this country, thereby in a great measure prejudging and preventing the fair operation of the Grand Jury. Persons were accused on that occasion, and many things were published against the accused, and even threats held out in papers well known to be under the influence of Government, in order to bring about a verdict contrary to the good sense, the honour, and the justice of the jury who tried the indictments. Their verdicts, however, were well known; and the practical inference from these trials was, that there never existed any such plot as was stated to exist, and that there was no occasion for shutting up individuals for six months upon such charges as had been preferred against them. But he hoped the day would come when such practices would be fairly examined, and when the most abominable inferences of treasonable intent, and all that new-fangled species of treason which had been introduced, and which was unknown to the law of this country, would be refuted in that House, in the manner they deserved.

A Member on the Treasury side of the House said, he should oppose the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act when the proper time came for discussing it; but that he could not agree to any departure from the usual mode of proceeding on the first day of the Session, more especially at a period when every thing that might admit of a construction disrespectful to his Majesty ought to be avoided.

*Mr. Solicitor General* (Mr. Mitford) said, although it had been asserted, that a jury had determined that no plot or conspiracy existed in this country to justify the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act; so far was he from agreeing in that assertion, that he was ready to declare, the evidence on the trials alluded to, proved beyond the possibility of a doubt, the existence of that conspiracy. The verdicts he considered to amount only to this, that the persons tried could not be tried again for the same act; but so far from negating a conspiracy, the evidence of one of the parties who had been accused, and who, after his being acquitted, was examined on another trial (he meant Mr. John Horne Tooke), expressly avowed the existence of that conspiracy.

*Mr. Brandling* called Mr. Mitford to order. He said, that sitting as an independent member in that House, he could not bear the rights of juries thus reviled; he thought such reflections extremely disorderly.

was to be maintained ; a doctrine, which, if permitted to pass in any place where the publication of opinion was important, might in time be insisted upon as the law of the land. The Learned Gentleman said, that the evidence upon the trials proved the existence of a treasonable plot : He might think so ; but did the jury think so ? Most unquestionably they did not. The jury had the advantage of hearing the speech of that Learned Gentleman, but it did not convince them ; and, Mr. Fox said, he believed it would have had no better effect upon himself. The Learned Gentleman said he was better informed than the Jury : But it did not appear from that observation, that the Learned Gentleman had communicated that superior knowledge, either on the trials on that occasion, or to the House on this. Mr. Fox took notice of the acquittals of Mr. Hardy, Mr. Tooke, Mr. Thelwall, and all the other gentlemen, who had been indicted as authors of a treasonable conspiracy and plot, on which it had been maintained in that House, that extraordinary steps ought to be taken.

The jury had negatived the existence of that conspiracy and plot, by finding them all *Not Guilty*.—That jury were not men who had favours to ask of Government ;—they were not placemen or pensioners, not men who sat as Members in that House agreeing to the Report of a Committee, and afterwards voting for the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus Act*, and then, perhaps, within a month, called to the House of Peers. No ; they were men who honestly and conscientiously performed their duty, and he believed they performed it well, to the satisfaction of the Public ; and happy indeed it was for the people of this country that their lives and characters, and every thing they held most dear, were in such hands. How then stood the case ? A Committee of that House had declared there existed a treasonable conspiracy in this country ; the jury, by their verdict, had denied its existence. He did not ask the prosecutors whether they were satisfied of the existence of a plot ; he dared say they were ; but he would ask a jury, and they would answer him there was no such plot. And was it the opinion of a Crown Lawyer or the opinion of an English Jury, with regard to the character of an individual, whose conduct had come under judicial investigation, that the House would prefer ? With these reflections, he thought his Honourable Friend judicious in calling the attention of the House as early as possible to the subject ; for, if time were given, fresh plots, new false alarms and conspiracies, might be resorted to and brought up to answer the same purposes as the last. They would call out their new John Nokes and Thomas Stiles, and all the herd of their spies, to support such plots ; and therefore, to avoid the possibility of  
such

see the motion intended to be made by his Hon. Friend ought not to be objected to. The House, for the purpose of asserting their own dignity and independence, and not from a desire of shewing disrespect to the Crown, for that would at all times be improper in the House of Commons, had proceeded to read a Bill, or do any other act, previous to taking the Speech from the Throne into their consideration. This they had done originally for establishing, and afterwards for continuing, a right which incontestably belonged to them; and it was a right they should continue to enjoy, because it was beneficial to the Public. That being the view he had of the subject, he confessed that all the debate which had arisen on the observation of his Hon. Friend was strictly regular; for it certainly was as regular for one person to assert, as it was for another to deny the existence of a plot. He listened with great attention, as he ought to do, to what he heard from the Solicitor General; and indeed he was induced to suppose, from his arguments, that he did not believe there was a plot existing; but, as he asserted it, it ought not to be denied to be his opinion. The Learned Gentleman had given his own opinion on these trials, and he had also taken notice of the decision of the jury. In giving his own opinion, even although his arguments should be against it, he had a right to state it as his opinion: But it did not appear that the jury had given him any authority to say any thing for them. With regard to the verdict of acquittal of a jury, Mr. Fox said, he understood it to be, in the language of the constitution of this country, an establishment of the innocence of the accused; a complete justification of the persons indicted. But he had heard language that night which was to him entirely new; for he had been told, that the verdict of acquittal was no more than that the accused party should not be tried again. That was a definition of law which tended to annihilate a privilege which was the surest bulwark of our constitution, and confound every distinction between guilt and innocence; he trusted therefore he should never hear that doctrine again, even from the colleagues of that Learned Gentleman. He had not the good fortune to hear his speech on the late trials, but there appeared to him, from what he had heard of that speech, to be a repetition of considerable parts of it to-night. The Learned Gentleman had insisted on the existence of a treasonable plot, because it appeared that there were some persons who wished for Universal Suffrage and Annual Parliaments; and because Addresses had been presented to the French Convention, or because any of these persons held opinions upon political subjects contrary to those of the Learned Gentleman. It was thus the doctrine of constructive treason

the constitutional operation of a verdict of acquittal in a Court of Justice. His Right Honourable Friend had said that such an acquittal was a complete establishment of innocence, and a complete justification of the accused. So little did he think that to be the case, that no person was bound to come to that conclusion for himself in that House. Out of the House it was unquestionably every man's duty not to arraign the verdict of any jury; but in that House there was no such injunction when the subject came to be discussed. Neither the presumption of common sense, nor any rule of legislative discussion, required that any Member of that House should agree in declaring that a person was wholly and entirely innocent of an offence laid to his charge, because he stood acquitted in a Court of Justice. As well might it be said that an house-breaker, a highwayman, or a pick-pocket, acquitted at the Session-house in the Old Bailey, was as fair, pure, and honourable a character as his Right Honourable Friend, merely because, by the technical rules and forms of a Court of Law, he should be entitled to his acquittal. Every man accustomed to attend Courts of Justice, knew that many guilty men were acquitted; not because any real doubts might be entertained of their guilt, but because they were entitled to that acquittal by the strict rules of legal evidence. He observed he did not expect to hear it argued, that merely on an acquittal, and without attending to any other circumstances, the accused party must be considered as purely innocent. He should not arraign the verdict of a jury any where else, nor did he wish to say any thing upon the subject. The jury were constituted as they ought to be constituted; they were nominated by the Sheriff, in the usual form, and returned. On the time for proceeding to the challenges, a vast number of them appeared to be disqualified, scarcely enough attending to allow the prisoner his peremptory challenges; and the Crown the challenges in the form of law required. The jury need not be clearly satisfied of the entire innocence of the party accused, in order to acquit him: If there was a doubt in their mind, that doubt was sufficient ground for their acquittal. But would any man say, that because, upon such a doubt, they might acquit, therefore there was no ground for the charge, or that the party was entirely innocent?

It had been said, that doctrines of High Treason, which were dangerous to the law, had been maintained on the late trials. He knew not to whom in particular that observation was directed. He was ready to take the responsibility on himself for what he had said upon these trials. He also had noticed much of what had been said by others; and in no instance

did

did there appear to him any thing that could warrant such an observation. The two Learned Gentlemen who took the lead in the prosecutions, had so conducted themselves as to rivet his esteem to them for ever. He concluded with observing, that he should have sat silent, if he had not heard some doctrines, which, in his opinion, ought to be refuted, especially as they came from an authority so justly and so highly respected.

*Mr. Fox* rose to explain. He said, he could never speak of the Hon. and Learned Gentleman, but with respect. No respect or esteem, however, which he might have for him should bias his opinion upon any subject. But it was certainly to him that he alluded, as combining the authority of a Judge with the character of an Advocate. He should certainly not have made the allusion, if he did not think his doctrines hostile to the constitution. He did not mean to insinuate that the Learned Serjeant had delivered any opinion as an Advocate, which he (*Mr. Adair*) did not believe to be a just one. Notwithstanding that, *Mr. Fox* observed, that nothing should deter him from delivering his own, the more especially upon points that involved every thing that can be dear to every honest man in this country. He must therefore declare, that much of the doctrine maintained on the late trials for High Treason was contrary, as it appeared to him, to the letter and to the spirit of the Act of Parliament of the 25th of Edward III. and, as far as he had examined, not warranted upon any good legal authority; a doctrine which he knew to be incompatible with the spirit of any good law, and which he believed to be disgusting to the most enlightened independent people of Great Britain. With respect to the effect of the verdict of the jury, all he had pronounced was the opinion of the jury: They had expressed no doubts, and he knew of none: Therefore he took it as it appeared, that the accused were *innocent*, because they were pronounced *Not Guilty*. He had no difficulty in saying, his opinion coincided with that of the jury. If there was any difference, it was only that he thought they should have told the prisoners, "You need not enter upon your defence, you are acquitted, because the evidence for the Crown is insufficient."

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, he would not advert to much of what he had heard upon this subject on the other side, because proper answers had been given to most of the arguments already. He wished the House to recollect what the question was, which was now before them. It was perfectly true that, in point of form, a Bill should be read previous to the entering on the discussion of the Speech from the Throne,

Throne, and therefore a motion for it was always made, but it was always a motion of form, and he believed it would be difficult to find, in the course of practical business, an instance where this was any thing but the form of preserving an ancient and important right of the House of Commons. No doubt could be entertained of the right which the House had to enter upon serious business previous to the discussion of his Majesty's Speech; but this was a right which was only to be used in cases of extreme urgency. What was the case here? An Hon. Gentleman had said that a certain Bill, the operation of which suspended the *Habeas Corpus Act*, ought to be repealed immediately. What reason was there for repealing it just at that time? There could be none, unless it was meant to be alleged, that what Parliament had acted upon, after due deliberation, had been disproved; or that the conduct of Government had been so reprehensible that they had manifestly abused the discretion which had been entrusted to them.

Would any of the Honourable Gentlemen on the other side take these grounds, and justify either of these propositions? They said the Jury had negatived the existence of a plot. In his opinion they had done no such thing. They had negatived the existence of the charge, upon the proof exhibited within the line of law, in the manner and form stated in the indictment; they had not disproved the existence of the serious grounds of alarm, or negatived that part of the charge which had been the reason and cause of the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus Act*, namely, that these persons were parties to a conspiracy, if not of treason, to a crime as great in moral guilt, and as dangerous to the rights and privileges of Parliament, and to the tranquillity of the country, as treason, or any other offence, possibly could be. The verdict of acquittal, therefore, was not to be considered conclusive evidence to the satisfaction of the House, that the Bill for suspending the *Habeas Corpus Act* ought to be repealed. He was for one prepared to argue that all the substantial grounds (he spoke not of formal or technical treason, but of that species of moral guilt and dangerous tendency which made precaution necessary, and which he believed in the opinion of the world at large was as destructive to the state as any treason whatever) were proved upon these trials. Whether it would be necessary to continue the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus Act*, he would not then argue, because it was not then necessary to argue it. He could not, however, leave it without saying that he saw no reason for abandoning the caution which the Legislature had provided. He must also add, that if it  
should

should appear after the trials of the persons charged in the indictment for high treason, it has not been supported, so as to lead to the proof of legal guilt against the individuals; if, nevertheless, the persons charged have been, in the opinion of the Public, guilty of a design as dangerous as any that ever was attempted, which did not come within the degree of punishment that the law at present provides, Parliament would then do wisely to consider whether more or less precaution to prevent such mischief should be adopted. He would not anticipate what the decision of the House would be upon that subject; nor would he then declare his opinion on it. But he would not admit the question to have been decided on the certain grounds, and particularly the high tone which had been adopted that day. He then proceeded to justify the officers of Government as to the length of the confinement of the persons who stood charged, and contended that they suffered no hardships to which they would not have been subjected, under the charges exhibited against them, if the *Habeas Corpus* Act had never been suspended. He observed that Government were justified in the accusations they made against them on the evidence which they had an opportunity of hearing; they could but hear one side, the defence was not open to them. On what they heard, these persons were committed, regularly charged by their indictments, and these indictments were found true bills by the grand jury. No higher justification could be had, and that he considered as an ample and sufficient answer to all complaints against the accusations. Under all these circumstances, there was nothing which could or ought to decide the mind of any impartial man against the continuance and renewal of the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act. It was a measure now as much as ever a necessary provision for the public safety. But leaving all these points behind, there was nothing, the Chancellor of the Exchequer said, in what had been urged that night, that ought to induce the House not to proceed to business, on which the public attention was earnestly fixed, and to depart from the ordinary mode of the proceedings of the House.

Mr. Lambton said, he considered the verdict of a jury in acquitting any person charged with a crime, to be conclusive evidence in justice, in morals, and in common sense, and a complete justification of innocence. He expressed great indignation at some of the doctrine delivered that night from the ministerial side of the House, and declared that after what he had heard he should not be surprised to hear it proposed from that quarter, that a Bastile should be erected in this country.



*Mr. Sheridan* in reply, took notice shortly of all the observations which had been made on his proposed motion. He said that the Bill, the reading of which he opposed, was "a Bill for preventing Clandestine Outlawries." He had no objection to such a Bill; but what he chiefly had in view, was to prevent a Bill for the clandestine outlawry of the *Habeas Corpus Act*, and the best securities for the lives and liberties of the people. When the Right Hon. Gentleman spoke of the suspension having been voted on solemn deliberation, he was not in the *highest form of memory*, for it was hurried through the House with unprecedented precipitation, in only two days, and without even the formality of a previous notice. By the trials for treason and the declaration of a Learned Gentleman, it appeared that there were at least two culprits, viz. the Attorney and Solicitor General, who had either prosecuted persons who were not engaged in the supposed conspiracy, or neglected to bring forward the evidence to convict them, although they were in possession of such evidence.

*Mr. Sheridan* said, it was not necessary for him then to persist in his motion, he could make it at any time he pleased. He had hinted already that if the House did not wish to hear it then, he would not persist in it. The time would soon come when the subject would be seriously discussed. He took therefore that opportunity of giving notice, that as every word he had that day heard from the other side of the House had confirmed him in his opinion, that the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus Act* was intended to be renewed when the present Act expired, he should take the earliest day he could to bring forward the discussion. He was determined to allow ministers no time to concert new plans for exciting alarm, no time to make fresh false accusations, no time to marshal and arrange spies, but to call at once upon the ministers for their reasons for continuing to deprive the people of this country of their dearest rights, after every honest man was convinced that the whole story of plots and conspiracies was nothing but a wicked fabrication. He took notice of the observations of *Mr. Serjeant Adair*, as to the right a Member of Parliament had in that House to revise the opinion of a jury. He differed entirely from the learned Serjeant, for he thought that House was the last place in England in which such a verdict should be arraigned. He adverted also to the observation of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, of the grand jury having found the bill against the persons who were tried for high treason. That Right Hon. Gentleman had forgotten to take notice that that and the other House of Parliament had previously

viciously found their bills upon the very same subject by their Reports. That, amongst others, was a very strong reason why that House should be extremely cautious in saying or doing any thing, that might tend to counteract the impression, which the verdicts of acquittal had justly made on the public mind; because it would appear, by their second interference in this extra-judicial proceeding, as if they were endeavouring to support their own former decision against the honest opinion of different English juries and mankind in general. He observed also, that the charge of high treason, or treasonable conspiracy, had that day actually been given up, even by the minister himself; however, for the purpose of continuing the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act, he might find it serviceable to his views to allege, that there existed a species of minor conspiracy; and it ought to be remembered that if this minor conspiracy only had been alleged originally, the minister would not have been empowered by law to seize the papers of the accused party, for nothing short of a positive charge of high treason could have justified that step. He concluded with giving notice that he should next day name the earliest day possible for the discussion of this important subject.

The Bill for preventing Clandestine Outlawries was then read.

### THIRD SECRETARY OF STATE.

*Mr. Sheridan* rose again and said, he was sorry to interrupt the business of the day a second time; but what he had then to state was an important point of order. He thought he saw an illustrious "stranger" (*Mr. Dundas*) in the body of the House, to whom, whatever might be his merits, to pay any greater degree of attention than to other "strangers," was irregular. *Mr. Burke's* Bill, which abolished the office of Third Secretary of State, enacted that if his Majesty, at any future period, should think proper to revive the office, the person appointed to it, if a Member of the House of Commons, should vacate his seat; he therefore apprehended the Right Honourable Gentleman was no longer a Member. Lord Grenville, they all knew, was Secretary of State for the foreign department; and he wished to know whether the Duke of Portland and the Right Hon. Gentleman were *one* Secretary of State, or *two* Secretaries of State; because, if they were two, he conceived that the Right Honourable Gentleman, from the nature of his office, must be the Third Secretary of State.

The 22d of the present King was then read by the Clerk.

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, the Honourable Gentleman surely had too much candour to have meant to inveigle and entrap his Right Honourable Friend into incurring the penalty (500*l.*) of sitting as a Member of the House, after he had vacated his seat by accepting the office of Third Secretary of State; and yet he had contrived to bring on a debate before noticing that his Right Honourable Friend was not a member. What however had his Honourable Friend accepted of that was new? He held the same seals he had held before. The question, "Who was the Third Secretary of State?" seemed almost to answer itself:—It must be the person who nominally accepted the office of Secretary of State, when there were two before. When the Honourable Gentleman talked of the nature of the office, he seemed not, to adopt his own phrase, to be *in the highest form of memory*; for any one of the Secretaries of State, the Duke of Portland, Lord Grenville, and Mr. Dundas, might indiscriminately give orders to any of his Majesty's Generals or Governors.

*Mr. Sheridan* said, he should have been sorry to inveigle the well-known innocence and simplicity of the Right Honourable Gentleman. According to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Duke of Portland was the *nominal* Third Secretary of State:—A more respectful mode of mentioning his ministerial office might have been adopted by his new friends. What confirmed him in the opinion that Mr. Dundas must be the Third Secretary of State was the Right Honourable Gentleman's declaration, on a former occasion, that he had accepted the office, he then held, merely as a temporary accommodation to his Majesty's service, and that he never went to bed at night, or rose in the morning, without feeling that he had undertaken more business than he was able to perform. In consequence he thought the great political *Alcides* had been called in from Burlington House, *ut quiescat Atlas*. It was lamentable to see an Act, which was one of the many that did honour to the political character of its author, violated in the spirit, if not in the letter, by those who had been the loudest in its praise. Calling the Duke of Portland the Third Secretary of State was a mere juggle to evade the Act; and the old ominous seals held by Lord George Germaine, more particularly ominous from the similarity of circumstances, had, he understood, been rummaged out on the occasion; he wished him joy therefore of his *new* place, which he by mistake had considered as an old one.

*Mr. Dundas* rose to correct the Honourable Gentleman's error; he had formerly complained of the great labour of his situations, but he had been occupier of no office or emolument  
by

by a juggle. He had never any salary as Secretary of State. He had merely received his Majesty's commands to perform certain duties appertaining to that office, and the rest were committed into hands by which they would be discharged with the highest integrity and ability, by a man of greater talents and virtues than he was entitled to lay claim to. The Duke of Portland, whom the Honourable Gentleman and his friends formerly took all occasions to praise, was not a nominal Secretary of State, for in his office was all the business within the home department, of Great Britain, Ireland, and the colonies.

*Mr. Fox* asked, whether *Mr. Burke's* Bill was merely a dead letter? Would a Third Secretary of State, succeeding the Duke of Portland, vacate his seat in the House of Commons, if previously a member of it? He was ready to admit that as the circumstances had been described, *Mr. Dundas* had not vacated his seat, according to the letter of the Bill; but could as much be said respecting its spirit? He could but acknowledge, that he was sorry to see the Duke of Portland, of whom he should never speak but in terms that became the respect he felt from long political connexion and private friendship, accepting an office which he himself had formerly thought ought to be abolished.

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, he could not admit that his Right Honourable Friend had vacated his seat either according to the spirit or the letter of the Bill in question, as there were not more offices nor more salaries than before the Duke of Portland had the name and the power of a Secretary of State.

*Mr. Fox* asked what his office was then, and if there were not, in the third office, an Under Secretary and Clerks; and, whether they had any salaries?

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, the third office was not unparliamentary, although Under Secretaries were employed.

#### HIS MAJESTY'S SPEECH.

The Speaker having produced a copy of his Majesty's Speech, it was read from the chair.

*Sir Edward Knatchbull* rose to move the Address, which he did in most respectful terms. He said, it was with infinite timidity that he addressed the House on the present occasion. He could have wished the task had fallen into abler hands. He meant to offer a few observations only for their consideration. Those persons who conducted the last unfortunate campaign (unfortunate he was justified in calling it, from the language of the Speech delivered from the Throne), would be responsible

lible for that conduct, and he had no doubt but that they would be able to account for its reverses and disappointments, in a manner satisfactory to the House. He did not mean, however, to cast any imputation on them, for he did not believe that ill success originated with them. He did not conceive it proper to comment on the separate negotiation into which the States General of Holland had entered; but as far as regarded this country, he thought it necessary to observe, that, however anxious all parties might be for a peace, it would be improper to make peace on any terms, that would not ensure the security of this nation, and the safety of all the other countries of Europe. The times required, that every man should declare, in a manly and honest manner, his sentiments on the state of affairs. In his opinion, there was no comparison between the state of this country and that of France: The resources of the latter were nearly annihilated, and their circumstances in the most rapid state of decline; whereas our resources were happily at the highest pitch of prosperity, and our commerce in the most flourishing situation! He drew also some favourable conclusions from the internal circumstances of the Republic. But on every consideration he did not think we had any thing to fear, not doubting that every Englishman would readily come forward in the cause with his hand, his heart, and his purse. With regard to the local importance of Corsica, he said, that it *might or might not be of advantage to this country*. He spoke in terms of compliment and congratulation on the mention made from the Throne of the approaching marriage of the Prince of Wales and the Princess Caroline of Brunswick, and expressed his satisfaction at hearing that a treaty of amity, commerce, and navigation, had been concluded with the United States of America.

Sir Edward concluded with moving an Address, the same in substance with that moved by Earl Camden in the House of Lords\*.

*Mr. Canning* rose to second the Address which had been moved by the worthy Baronet who had just sat down. Whatever difference of opinion might prevail in general in that House, *Mr. Canning* said, he was led to hope, that, upon some of the topics which were contained in his Majesty's Speech, there would be a perfect unanimity. He was not so sanguine as to expect that, upon those points, on which there had been manifested so wide a difference of opinion among Gentlemen, they should upon this occasion perfectly agree. But there were circumstances communicated in his Majesty's Speech, which

\* See page 8.

must give the most sincere satisfaction to every Gentleman in that House and in the country. The information that a treaty of amity and commerce had been concluded with the United States of America, must, he was sure, diffuse universal satisfaction; and the gracious communication of his Majesty, respecting the marriage of his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales with the Princess of Brunswick, must inspire sentiments of joy and congratulation in the breast of every British subject.

With regard to other parts of his Majesty's Speech, he was aware that to expect a complete coincidence of opinion would be vain and fruitless: He had some hopes, however, that, for one night, Gentlemen would consent to lay aside their differences, and unanimously to concur in the Address which had just been moved. If it should happen, that he should be disappointed in his hopes of perfect unanimity, at least, he hoped, he should have the honour of dividing with a large majority.

With those Gentlemen with whom he had the pleasure to vote last year, it would not, he hoped, be necessary to urge many arguments to induce them to concur in the present Address. If any were necessary, he would only desire those Gentlemen to look at and consider the various decisions and declarations which that House had come to since the commencement of the war. These decisions, Gentlemen would recollect, had not been made by that House, but with the most mature deliberation, and after the most elaborate discussion. If then the opinions adopted by the majority of the House were founded at that time in wisdom and justice, he wished to know what had occurred since they had last met, which could properly and reasonably have induced them to alter their sentiments?

Some circumstances had undoubtedly occurred since the conclusion of the last sessions, of an unfavourable nature to this country: He was ready candidly to admit, that the successes of the enemy had been great and unexpected; that by the most unheard-of exertions, they had over-run an immense tract of territory, and had compelled the allied armies to retreat before them.—He was ready also to admit, that the allies had, in many instances, been unsuccessful; that many of their plans had failed, and that this country, in particular, had shared in the general misfortunes.—But when he admitted all this, he must be allowed to ask, ought it to weaken or strengthen our determination of pursuing the war in the most vigorous manner? The reasons which induced him to be of the latter opinion, he would state in the manner least likely to trespass much upon the patience of the House:

Would

Would any Gentleman stand up and undertake to prove that any of the misfortunes, which we had experienced during the course of the last campaign, were imputable to the ministers of this country? Or were they not rather such as no human prudence could foresee, and no human power prevent?

Most of the failures which had attended us in the last campaign must be imputed to the defection of our allies, and also to the uncommon number, unparalleled exertions, and irresistible force of our enemies; a force of which history had no parallel. He was perfectly aware that it might be said that the Government of this country might have avoided many of the calamities of the war, if they had attended to the warnings and predictions which had been given by Gentlemen on the other side of the House.

It was true that they had foretold the defection of our allies, and the astonishing exertions of the enemy, and he could not but confess that unfortunately the event had justified the prediction. Here, however, he wished to observe, that it was no difficult matter to prophesy disappointment and ill success: If the prediction proved false, Gentlemen would feel too much satisfaction in the success of their country to think of the prediction; if it proved true, those who made it would triumph, as they would certainly feel some satisfaction in their superior sagacity.

When he thus candidly gave credit to those Gentlemen for their predictions, he wished it might not be forgotten, that some predictions had been made by ministers, and those who supported the war, which had been equally justified by the event.—That Government which existed in France, and which had been represented as perfectly stable and secure, had been stated by Gentlemen on his side of the House, to be so constructed, that it could not possibly exist for any length of time. When Robespierre was in the height of his power,—when he governed France with the most absolute sway, and when his will was received throughout France as law,—even then his fall was predicted; with how much justice, the event had shewn.

When Jacobinism was at its greatest height; when its influence circulated through every part of the French Government; when it seemed as the very source of motion in all their enterprises; even then its fall was foretold in that House, and, happily for humanity, with truth.

He wished, however, not to be misunderstood; he did not mean that, by the accession of the Moderates to the sovereign power in France, the possibility of our treating with them had

become greater, because the only difference between them and the Jacobins was, that they possessed the intentions, though they had not the power, of the Jacobins. The hostility of the Moderates towards this country was equal to that of the Jacobins; the only difference was, they had not the means of carrying it into execution.

But when he admitted that their exertions had been great, he wished the House to consider for a moment at what an expence these exertions had been made. It appeared, from the reports of Cambon, the French financier, that the expences of France, since the commencement of the war, had been three hundred and three millions sterling; and since the commencement of the war with England, two hundred and sixty millions. This enormous expence they had been enabled to sustain, by seizing all the property in the kingdom, and distributing out sustenance as a kind of donative to the people; by raising, by the means of terror, the value of assignats; and depressing, by the same means, the price of purchasable commodities.

With respect to the present system of Moderation, he was far from thinking that it was at all propitious to the interests of this country; he admitted that they did not carry on that wholesale trade in blood which had marked the reign of the Jacobins; they were occupied in the more *innocent* employments of balancing accounts, and adjusting to each man his share of murder and of guilt. In order to form an idea of what terms of peace we could expect from the French, he wished the House to attend to the declarations which they had made;—they had divided their enemies into two classes, *viz.* those who were the instigators of the war, and those who were compelled to join in the war.

The House would have an opportunity of judging what reliance we could have upon their moderation, by the terms which they would give to the Dutch, who were supposed to come within the latter description. If the terms which they gave to the Dutch were hard, what could this country expect, who were supposed to be the most determined to carry on the war, and whom the French upon all occasions seemed to speak of with peculiar enmity and inveterate malevolence? It had been insinuated, that the French would accede to a peace with Holland upon the ground of a *status quo*: But he would ask the House whether this country could, with any regard to its honour and dignity, consent to a peace on such terms? He wished it to be remembered that we had taken under our protection people, who, groaning under the effects of French tyranny, had fled to us for succour; would



we then give them up to butchery, while they were clinging round our knees for protection ?

If, then, we could even now have a peace with France, it must be an insecure one ; it must be a peace with all the inconveniencies and expences of a war establishment. Such a peace, he was sure, this country would never assent to ; and therefore, he hoped he should divide with a very large majority for the Address. Even if we were to have a peace, with any sort of security, it could not be obtained without continuing to keep up a war establishment ; and could it be supposed that the French would suffer us to keep up such an establishment, without demanding an explanation, which would of course produce dissensions ? With regard to the general observation, at what time were we to think of negotiating for peace, he would answer, that must be governed by future circumstances ; for the question was not, whether we should negotiate at any time ? but whether, under all the circumstances, we would negotiate now ? He maintained that, from the commencement of the French Revolution down to the present time, there was no stability in its government ; nor could there be any under the present system of its rulers : Every day afforded some new change. He maintained that the very energy of its military power was a proof that it could not be of long continuance ; for even the armies, which performed such prodigies, had fought under every commander, only under an idea that they were fighting against order and established government ; and he was persuaded that the moment such a form of government was established in France as would be fit for us to negotiate with, and when we began to negotiate, the system under which their army fought would be at an end, and they would lay down their arms. These were the points which constituted the real weakness of the French. We were happily the reverse of all this. On our strength and their weakness, therefore, he relied. He observed that it was a duty which we owed to every established government of Europe, as well as to our own happiness, to continue the present contest ; for if we did not persist now, we must inevitably fall, and with us all Europe. The hostility of this country had already produced many changes for the better in France, and there was reason to hope that a continuance of the war would bring them to a state in which we could make peace with honour and security. He concluded with seconding the Address.

The Address was then read.

*Mr. Wilberforce* said, he rose to discharge a painful duty. He could truly say this was a subject which had occupied his long and anxious attention. He had considered it well, and he had

had been some time in doubt, for he knew that much ought to be heard on both sides; and, impelled by a duty paramount to all feelings of private friendship and personal regard, he was now come to the disagreeable situation of differing from those with whom it was the happiness of his life to agree. He had the greatest confidence in his Majesty's ministers; but he could not answer to his constituents, nor to his own feelings as a man, if he continued to support them after he ceased to approve of their measures. If there had been any thing like a pacificatory tendency in his Majesty's Speech, if there had been any thing which did not preclude the probability of a peace, he should have been happy in being able to give his assent to it; he would, at least have tried the experiment a little longer: But no such hope was held out. The Speech from the Throne, and the Address moved, spoke a language too plain to be misunderstood. It was impossible for any Gentleman to vote for it, who did not go to the full length of declaring that we must be at war until there is a counter-revolution in France; for it stated the difference between us to be such, that it was impossible to make it up, and it was upon this ground that he felt himself bound to oppose it.

The Hon. Gentleman who had just sat down, hurried away by his own eloquence, had made assertions which it was impossible to maintain, and had asked questions which it was unfortunately but too easy to answer.

The Hon. Gentleman said, the situation in which we were placed at present, was the same as when Parliament separated last session; or, if there was any difference, it was not such a one as made it necessary for us to alter our objects. The view he had taken of affairs since Parliament separated last summer, suggested to him many differences in our situation, and those of a very important nature. In the first place, the Jacobin system, which was so hostile to the interests of this country, was destroyed; and tho' its principles were not so effectually eradicated as he could wish, yet the fountain-head, from which these detestable maxims had their source, which had desolated France, and disturbed the tranquillity of Europe, was, he hoped, effectually destroyed. In their room another party had assumed the reins of power, which had for its professed basis, Moderatism. This was at least the assumption of a virtue, if they had it not, and shewed what was the real opinion of the people of France, by a party thinking it necessary, in order to maintain their interest, to affect such principles. This was an important event, which, in his opinion, rendered our situation extremely dissimilar from what it was at the close of the last session; but there

was another, which he thought of equal if not greater weight, and that was, that the confederacy with which we had acted was now in a manner dissolved. His Majesty's Speech informed the House that one of our allies, for whose defence we entered into the war, was now upon terms of negotiation with the French; and another of our allies, who had been of very little assistance to us last campaign, would probably give no more in the ensuing one.—This dissolution of the grand confederacy appeared to him a circumstance of great weight; while it existed, it must of course give confidence to the Royalists and all the discontented parties in France, and of course in the same proportion must depress our enemies. But even when the confederacy existed in its greatest force—when there were no less than forty-three insurrections in the interior of France—even then we were unable to overcome them; then how could we expect, when the confederacy was in a great measure dissolved, and when the insurrections in France were nearly suppressed, that our successes would be greater when our means were less? Another thing to be attended to was, that our arms had been unsuccessful; was that a trifling thing? No blame was to be imputed to any of our officers—so much the worse for the prospect of our future success in attempting to do any thing by force of arms, for what had we to expect if every thing had been well conducted already? This was another important point, in the idea of a counter-revolution in France. Besides, when we had part of France in our own possession, all the people in those provinces might be supposed to feel some ardour, on account of a prospect of security, from the protection of a regulated government; and yet the French, although repulsed once or twice, would return like the overflowing of the ocean, and bear down every thing before them. Such had been the case with the French, and had we any prospect now of its being otherwise? this appeared to him to be a great and important consideration. He confessed he began to entertain doubts as to the expediency and propriety of carrying on the war during last session; and the circumstance which first staggered him was, that during all the various revolutions in France, the army still continued staunch—they fought with equal alacrity, whoever or whatever party was paramount in France. On all the points in which he could view the subject, in his mind no good could arise from voting for this Address, because the House was called upon by it, to go on with the war, until we had accomplished the destruction of France, of which he saw no prospect. He therefore thought that another course ought to be pursued. But when he expressed his wish, that the door should not be shut against peace, he begged

begged it might not be supposed that he wished any step should be taken which would in any manner lessen the dignity, or tarnish the honour, of England. His objects were extremely different; he wished that this country should display its magnanimity, by declaring itself not averse to peace—it could not be supposed that such a declaration on the part of England was the effect of distress—her power and resources were too well known to admit of such an idea; but if the French should reject fair and honourable terms, he would advise his Majesty to do the utmost to carry on a negotiation with effect, and if negotiation should fail, then to prosecute the war with energy and vigour, if it could be so conducted; but he really thought we were incapable of bringing our force into action. True magnanimity consisted, in his judgment, not in persisting against conviction in an opinion once taken, but in candidly acknowledging an error when discovered.—True magnanimity did not consist in using high-sounding words to support an erroneous position; such conduct could only be compared to the policy of a chapman, who depreciates the value of a commodity he wants to purchase, and who generally deceives only himself.

He begged Gentlemen to consider what our situation really was, and to ask themselves whether they thought the interest of the country would be better consulted by a peace, or by a prosecution of the war. If they were of the latter opinion, he would then ask, were there any substantial grounds upon which to expect success in the ensuing campaigns? He was sorry to say, the answer must be in the negative. Still less grounds were there to hope for a counter-revolution founded upon such principles as we should approve of. The present principles of France had now gained strength by duration. New generations were coming into life with the most inveterate prejudices against the ancient government, and against monarchy in general; there was therefore but little hope of the re-establishment even of a limited monarchy in France; nor did he see the slightest prospect of our being able to enforce a government by persevering in holding out the idea that we were determined to dictate what that form of government should be. Indeed, to speak his sentiments plainly, he had rather they would adopt a form of government similar to that established in America. Another very important point, in which the state of this country was altered, was in the cessation of the danger in which we formerly were of the propagation of those detestable opinions broached in France. The good sense of the people of England and of other states must have shewn them, that to reduce these principles to practice, is to introduce every evil which can injure civil society. He confessed he did not believe

therefore vote for the Amendment, which, in every point of view, must be productive of beneficial consequences.

*Mr. Windham (Secretary at War, with a seat in the Cabinet)* said, he had heard with surprise and grief the arguments in support of the Amendment. What was their obvious tendency?—Submission, humiliation, degradation before an inveterate and insolent enemy. It was absurd to say, that a display of our force would cure the evil; for the very act of offering to treat, or suing for peace, would be a confession of weakness that could not be done away. Did the French Convention act thus, when the confederacy against them appeared the most powerful, and they were pressed by the arms of the allies in every quarter? When their armies were driven back from Aix-la-Chapelle within their own country?—No: They abated nothing of their mighty and enterprising efforts; they returned with fresh alacrity to the charge. They remitted nothing of their lofty language; they never once talked of peace. And ought Britons to be outdone by them in any feature of fortitude? It was proposed by the Hon. Mover of the Amendment, to consent to nothing less than a safe and honourable peace, while it was acknowledged in the same breath, that no peace, concluded under the present circumstances, could be safe; while it was alleged, as an argument, that we might make it safe, by keeping ourselves on our guard, and prepared for war. The war, it was true, had been unsuccessful; his Majesty in his Speech asserted it, and the fact had been blazoned forth with peculiar zeal and assiduity, by those who made it their business to declaim against the war; but it had been so, only as compared with the wishes, the hopes, and the force of the confederacy. It had been unsuccessful from conduct, on the part of some of the allies, of which, for the honour of nations, he hoped the instances would be few. It was not unsuccessful, compared with foreign wars in which this country had been engaged. Look at the history of our wars with Louis XIV. which continued, with little interruption, for twenty years after the Revolution. In those wars, before the battle of Hockstet, we and our allies had been much more unsuccessful than in the present war, and yet, by spirit and perseverance, we triumphed in the end. All, therefore, that could with truth be said was, that the war had hitherto had only a *negative* success. If the enemy had over-run part of the territories of our allies, we had in our hands very valuable possessions of theirs, which rendered the war, however unsuccessful as to the main object of it, not unsuccessful with regard to us individually. The circumstance from which the greatest danger appeared, and of which he had

seen an alarming symptom in the speeches of Gentlemen who supported the Amendment, was, that the country was not true to itself: It had not put hand and heart to the war, as on former occasions, when the stake was not so great, and the crisis far less formidable. This was owing to several causes.—The French revolution, in its earlier stages, was looked upon with a favourable eye by the people of this country.—We all regarded it as the virtuous effort of a great nation, to correct the abuses of its government; as the friends of liberty, we looked upon it with an indulgent eye; and although we saw things which we could not approve, we were willing to hope that the evil would be transitory, and the good permanent. Yet even at that time, there were not wanting men of great and comprehensive minds to warn us of the consequences that must necessarily result from the principles on which the French revolution was proceeding. A Right Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Burke), who he regretted was no longer a Member of that House, in a book which he would advise all who heard him once more to read, had predicted the evils that must necessarily ensue from their doctrines of liberty, equality, and the rights of men. It was his fate not to be believed at the time, and afterwards to be found completely right. Then came the opinions of those who having favoured the French revolution at its commencement, could not so soon as others detach their affections from a system that had led to massacre and ruin. The imaginations of the people at large continued to be amused by, as he and those with whom he had now the happiness to act contended, a numerous and active party infected to the bone with French principles, and intent on the subversion of the British constitution. Societies formed by this party had propagated doctrines the most hostile to the interests of this country. But it was said the members of these societies had been acquitted by the verdict of a jury; and Gentlemen talked of their innocence in a tone of exultation. He wished them joy of the innocence of an *acquitted felon*.

[He was called to order by a Member under the gallery, who said he could not hear without indignation the term *felon* applied to a man who had been acquitted, and the verdict of an English jury arraigned and degraded.]

Mr. Windham, in explanation, said he did not mean to arraign the verdict of a jury; he meant only to say that the acquittal of the persons who had been brought to trial for treason, although proof that there was no legal evidence of their guilt in the opinion of the juries, by no means proved that they were free from moral guilt. The evidence in his mind established the direct contrary. The minds of the people, as he had

before observed, were agitated by a party here countenanced and supported by men of great consideration, who, in support of their own views, were willing to receive the aid of men whose views they knew to be very different, and so far made common cause with them. The French revolution in a very early stage proclaimed universal peace; and all who applauded this visionary doctrine, continued to applaud those by whom it was promulgated, even after it was seen that their practice led only to war and devastation. These were some of the circumstances which had rendered the prosecution of the war on our part less vigorous than it ought to have been. He maintained that our interference in the internal affairs of France, when that interference became necessary for our own safety, was wise and just. It was the distrust of this which had unnerved our exertions, and prevented us from interfering so soon as we ought to have done. To justify our interference in the affairs of other nations, he adduced the example of the Manchester Societies, who had congratulated the French on their revolution, and quoted a motto from Vattel, to a pamphlet which had accidentally come into his hands, to the following purpose: "Every government that is threatened has a right to resist the power that threatens it, till such time as from that power it is secure." This being the state of our *right* to go to war, what were the true principles of war? Were they not to repel injuries, and to maintain honour? How then would our relinquishing the war correspond to these principles? To leave off after *one* unsuccessful campaign; to lock up ourselves in our own consequence; to lie down in fear; to fatten and grow rich; and, in short, to maintain most anxiously that *tutum servitium* so degrading to man? The advantages of war or peace were not to be estimated by the territory or the trade we might gain or lose. No nation could say—Let us be disgraced, provided we grow rich; if it did, what safety for its riches? When he received advice, he must consider both the advice itself, and those from whom it came. Approving or disapproving of the French revolution must in future decide and distinguish the political characters of men. They were extremes irreconcilable, and what was fit for the one could never be good for the other. When, therefore, any man offered him advice, he would first ask to which of the two descriptions he belonged; and if he found him to differ in this essential point from himself, he would say, "This may be good advice for you, but cannot be good advice for me." The people of this country, he trusted, would in future think this distinction as strongly marked as he did. He could not see upon what principle or with what propriety,

those,

those, who originally considered the war as just and necessary, could now change their opinion. The Hon. Gentleman who moved the Amendment, had, as far as his single vote went, contributed to embark his country in the war; and having done so, was it fair, merely on account of disasters, perhaps only casual and temporary, to abandon it? The confederacy against the common enemy was not to be considered as dissolved, because one or two of its members had withdrawn. Even if it were dissolved, how long was it since we entertained the idea that Great Britain alone was not able to cope with France? With respect to the number of the well-disposed inhabitants of France, there was no reason to believe that our chance of co-operation within the kingdom was less than it had been at any former period. He was astonished at hearing any man talk of the stability of the French government, which exhibited nothing but a succession of changes, sudden as the shifting scenes of a pantomime, and these changes generally effected by violence. Nor was peace more likely to be obtained for our asking for it. If it were, what would then be the situation of this country? A situation so awful, that he durst hardly contemplate it. The intercourse between the two countries must be opened; the French would pour in their emissaries, and all the English infected with French principles, whom we had now the means of excluding, would return to disseminate their abominable tenets among our people. A Jacobinical club would be erected at every one's door; of property, an inquisition immediately instituted respecting each man's rights to it; and a Convention might be even established in the neighbourhood of that House. With what views would the French come? With the views very forcibly expressed in a song performed with great applause in one of those *innocent* societies, as they were now called, a stanza of which he recollected:

“ They come, they come, the myriads come,  
From Gallia to invade us;  
Raise, raise the pike, beat, beat the drum,  
They come like friends to aid us.”

They would go among our poor, among our labourers, among our manufacturers, and teach them the doctrine of liberty and equality. They would point out the gilded palaces of the rich, and tell them they ought to be plundered and demolished for the benefit of the poor. True it was that the poor man had as great an interest in the security of property as the rich; but could this argument be made so clear to the poor man, as to persuade him to respect the property of his wealthy neighbour while he had no property of his own, or



as it might be, for such was the necessary order of society, the means of obtaining any, when he stood most in need of it? In this situation of danger then, shall we send a submissive commission to them?

If the aggression of the Spaniards at Nootka Sound, a place scarcely marked in our maps, called forth the threatening vengeance of this country, if our own territories are not dismembered, our resources almost untouched, should we give up a war, in comparison of which all former ones are as *childrens play*, and all peace must be *ruin*? Such a peace would be worse than any probable event of war. But of the future events of war we had no reason to despond. Exertions, greater than the country could make at any former period, were now so lightly borne as hardly to be felt. Who could say that he had felt them, except those whose expences were so near the whole extent of their means, that the least accident, either in peace or war, must reduce them to distress? Had the poor felt them, unless in a few particular and local instances? Had a man in that House felt them? Had those, who were constantly telling the poor of the miseries of war, been obliged to curtail a single luxury? [Here Mr. Sheridan reminded him that the *Members* were not the *poor*.] He acknowledged that the *Members* were opulent, and the representatives of opulence; but he held it as a maxim, that if the *rich* felt no suffering, the *poor* were not likely to feel any also. It was not the character of the English easily to despond; perseverance and invincibility were their characteristics. They had met France *single-handed* in her proudest day. What then can hinder us, unimpaired, to go to war with a nation whose property is blended, whose capital is with accelerating rapidity, wasting away, and itself upon the brink of poverty? With such a *paniemoonium* is it possible for us for a moment to think of treating? They are *bleeding*; our wound is but *skin-deep*. The cause for which they are fighting, it had been said, would animate the French, and render them invincible. Where had this invincible courage appeared? In what instance, in what quarter had the courage of our soldiers and seamen been inferior to theirs? Sorry he should be if we could not do for the best of all causes what the French could do in support of every thing the most flagitious. The French emigrants in our service, in every instance, had displayed a valour and perseverance not surely to be exceeded by their insatuated countrymen, against whom they were reduced to the necessity of taking up arms. Mr. Windham dwelt at some length on the unimpaired resources of this country, compared with the unnatural, and, consequently, unsound resources of France, from which

which he inferred that, whatever present appearances might indicate, we must be ultimately successful. He exhorted the House to imitate the perseverance of the French, who endured every hardship, and in all their domestic contests, to do them justice, never forgot the common cause of their country. He concluded with recommending the advice given by King William to his Parliament after an unsuccessful campaign—that by persevering they might hope, with confidence, to preserve their religion, liberties, and constitution, if they were not wanting to themselves, and displayed the patient spirit of Englishmen.

*Mr. Banks* declared himself to be as much astonished at what had fallen from the Right Hon. Gentleman (*Mr. Windham*), as that Gentleman had stated himself to be at the speech of his Hon. Friend (*Mr. Wilberforce*); a speech which was replete with that manly and decided reasoning, which so strongly characterized every opinion advanced by that Hon. Gentleman. He did not however feel much surprised that any person, who had been so strenuous an advocate for the commencement of the present war, should continue so warm in his approbation of its continuance.

*Mr. Banks* said, he had voted for the war as just and necessary, because it was undertaken in consequence of an aggression on the part of the French. But there must be some period for restoring peace. He lamented to see that period put off by the Speech from the Throne, and the Address, to such a distance, as afforded little prospect short of an eternal state of warfare. Were we, he asked, to be in a state of eternal warfare? Were we never to treat with France while France had a republican government? Those who answered in the affirmative ought to be able to shew that the republican government of France must be speedily dissolved. If they could not shew this, as he thought they were unable to do, it was no symptom of fear to say, that a war of such indefinite duration must be productive of inevitable distresses, that even national bankruptcy might be the consequence, and that it was wise and prudent to look to the earliest opportunity of making peace. It seemed to him that the French Republic would last longer than the war system could last. We must treat some time or other, and the earliest time was the best. The allies with whom we had engaged in the war, were much more deeply interested in it than we. One of these allies was negotiating; the co-operation of another even money could not buy; and the complete assistance of the Emperor we were not to expect gratuitously. Was Great Britain singly, or at her sole expence, to fight the battles of  
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all those allies? There was no degradation in offering to treat on fair and equal terms. True magnanimity consisted not in haughtiness, but in candour and plain dealing. If we were at war with an acknowledged power, we might have peace in the worst event by some sacrifice of commerce or of territory; but in the present war we staked every thing, for we said we would not treat with the existing Government of France, and held out no prospect but that of extermination on the one side or other. We ought therefore to explain to the French that we were willing to treat upon equitable terms, and that we had no intention of interfering with their internal government. He was convinced that the risk incurred by making peace was infinitely less than that of continuing the war, and therefore thought it a duty he owed to his country and his constituents to vote for the Amendment.

*Mr. Buxton* said, there was nothing in the Address that declared we would not treat with the French Republic. He lamented the arguments for discontinuing the war, which he had no doubt would be read with acclamation in the French Convention. Feeling, as he did, the distresses of the country, and having seen them to be great, he would rather spend his last shilling, and shed the last drop of his blood, than submit to treat with the present rulers of France.

*Sir Richard Hill* said, "Mr. Speaker, Though I never attempt to deliver my sentiments in this House without feeling that awe and respect which are due to the assembly before which I stand, yet at no time do I remember to have risen under so much distress and agitation as I do at present.

"Any one, who may have paid the smallest attention to the conduct of so insignificant an individual, must have observed that for the course of many years I have shewn an uniform and steady attachment to the present Administration, and particularly to the truly worthy and distinguished character at the helm of public affairs; I have therefore always esteemed it my honour and my happiness to give him my feeble support and my confidence. But

AMICUS PLATO, AMICUS SOCRATES, MAGIS AMICA PATRIA.

"Sir, my difficulty does not end here. I have always understood that an Address of thanks for a Speech from the Throne carried with it a degree of personal respect to the Throne itself: Happy then should I esteem myself, could I give my voice for the original motion this night; but if I am thereby to be looked upon as pledging myself to vote for the continuation of the war, I cannot in conscience do it. How, Sir, can I again look my constituents or my countrymen in the

the face, were I to vote the money out of their pockets, and the blood out of their veins, in support of a war which has hitherto been disastrous in the extreme, and which, if persisted in, I am persuaded will be most awful in the event?

"It is true, when the war first took place I voted for it as a war of *justice* and of *necessity*, nay, as a war which was *unavoidable*. I was convinced that our alarms, both as to internal and external danger, were far from being chimerical or groundless, and I thought, and do think, that much praise was due to Government for their timely and wise exertions for the safety of the country. But when our last campaign was ended, and we had fulfilled every engagement with our allies (who, by the bye, had fulfilled none with us), I was exceedingly grieved to see that ministers were bent on prosecuting the war, and should certainly have voted for a motion made for peace, towards the close of the last session, by a Right Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Fox)—whose philanthropy is universally acknowledged, and whose lenity I myself have sufficiently experienced, when he might, by a word, have crushed me to atoms—had it not been for something which fell from the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the course of the debate, which was, *That the French Convention would declare any of their Members traitors who should but mention peace with England*. This decided my vote that night; but let it be observed that the sanguinary faction of Robespierre then ruled. Since then several months have elapsed, during which we have been *prosecuting the war with vigour*, as it is called; but what have we, or what have our allies, gained by it? I believe the word RUIN will answer the question for all parties. Try it for the Emperor; try it for the King of Spain; try it for the King of Sardinia; try it for the Stadtholder; I am unwilling to say, try it for ourselves. But have any steps been taken by us to put an end to the war? I fear none at all. On the contrary, have we not been soliciting, bribing, courting, coaxing Kings and Emperors to carry on the war almost whether they would or not? And with what difficulty have they at last been coaxed to defend their own territories with English money!

"To bring this matter to a short issue—Is there an honest independent man in this House who will not ask, Is there, or is there not, an opportunity of making peace on any tolerable terms? If it be said *yes*, then, in God's name, let us endeavour to do it without delay; if *no*, then let us withdraw our forces from the continent, and keep them to defend ourselves. Let Old England add to her wooden walls, by which she has ever proved herself mistress of the ocean, and shouted on the vast theatre of the globe that *Britannia rules the waves*.

"I would

"I would not be understood, from any thing I have said, to lay our miscarriages at the door of the Right Hon. Gentleman. I believe he inherits his illustrious father's sentiments with regard to continental wars, inasmuch that what one of our own poets said of a *quondam* great minister of France, may justly be applied to him,

"Peace is my dear delight, not Fleury's inore."

"I believe he kept off war as long as in prudence he thought that he possibly could, and till he apprehended both justice and necessity compelled him to enter into it. But he has been unfortunate, things have turned out contrary to his expectation; and I sadly fear, that unless the present system be abandoned, no change for the better can be expected. Under this persuasion, Sir, I give my hearty approbation of my worthy friend's Amendment.

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* and *Mr. Sheridan* rose at the same time; but after some perseverance, *Mr. Sheridan* gave way.

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, "I should not have so much endeavoured, Sir, to have engaged your attention at the present moment, had not a sudden indisposition seized me, which I was apprehensive, might, at a later hour, have incapacitated me from entering fully into the discussion of a question, upon which I must be supposed to feel most anxious to deliver my sentiments.

"I am aware, that there are some Gentlemen with whom the original opinions, which they have expressed on the war, prevent me from entertaining any hopes of concurrence. But there are other Gentlemen, who having supported the war at its commencement, have been led, by the disastrous events of the campaign, to change their former sentiments, and to withdraw their former support. It is with these Gentlemen that I shall consider myself more immediately at issue. And, Sir, I must first make some remarks on the arguments which they have drawn from the words of the Address. To this Address they say, that they cannot give their assent, because it pledges them *never* to make peace with the *republican* Government of France. I do not consider that it does so pledge them. It says only, that with a government, such as the present government of France, we cannot treat on terms that can be deemed secure. And, Sir, where does there exist this imperious necessity to sue for peace? Are we sunk down and depressed to such an absence of hope, and to such a want of resources? If we were indeed so calamitously situated—if we were indeed so devoid of hope, and so deprived of resources—if the continuance of the war produced so intolerable a pressure, then, per-

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haps,

haps, we might consent to a change of system. I am ready to confess, that I can conceive an imaginary case of a peace being made with the government of France, even in its republican form; but I will fairly say also, that I have no idea of any peace being secure, unless France return to the monarchical system. That there may, however, be intermediate changes that may give the probability of a peace with that country, even if it continued a Republic, I am ready to allow, though I certainly think that the monarchical form of constitution is best for all the countries of Europe, and most calculated to ensure to each of them general and individual happiness. Considering myself, therefore, as I said before, principally at issue with those who now, for the first time, dissent from the prosecution of the war, I am content to deliver my sentiments before I hear the arguments of some Gentlemen who will probably enter into a more full discussion than the subject has yet received.

"Sir, the reasons that have induced Gentlemen to dissent from the prosecution of the war, seem to have possessed a considerable influence on the manner in which they speak of the justice and necessity of the war at its commencement; and their language is now fainter and feebler than I had reason to expect. Contending, as these Gentlemen and I did, with the new and monstrous system of cruelty, anarchy, and impiety; against those whose principles trampled upon civilized society, religion, and law—contending, I say, with such a system, I could not have entertained the slightest expectation, that from them would have proceeded such an Amendment.

"It has pleased inscrutable Providence that this power of France should triumph over every thing that has been opposed to it; but let us not therefore fall without making any efforts to resist it—let us not sink without measuring its strength. If any thing could make me agree to retire from the contest, it would be the consciousness of not being able to continue it. I would at least have no cause to reproach myself on the retrospect. I would not yield till I could exclaim,

— Potuit quæ plurima virtus

Esse fuit, toto certatum est corpore regni.

"If, Sir, I have expressed myself with more emotion than is consistent with the propriety of debate; the particular situation in which I stand, opposing and contesting the opinions of those, with whom I have been on all occasions in almost all points fortunate enough to agree, will, I trust, excuse the warmth of my feelings.

spect of assistance from any other quarter? Besides, I think, I shall shew you that you are desired to relinquish the conflict, at a time when all the national and artificial resources of your enemy are verging to a rapid dissolution.

"I must now take notice of a speculation which has been indulged; that if you withdraw, France will return to some more moderate system of government. I ask whether we ought to put ourselves in such a situation of hazard, which, if decided against us, would involve us in much greater calamities than we have yet experienced, and would reduce us to a situation in which we should be without means and without resources?

"When it was said, therefore, that a peace will have the effect to overthrow the government of France, the proposition is by no means clear; the probability is much greater, that the persons now at the head of the government, will, in order to continue their own power (and in France, it is to be recollected, that the continuance of their power is connected with that of their lives, so that, in addition to the incentives of ambition, they have the all-powerful motive of self-preservation), be induced to continue the same system of measures that now prevails. Obligated as they would be to recal a numerous army from the frontiers, will the troops of whom it was composed, after having tasted the sweets of plunder and the licence of the field, be contented to return to the peaceful occupations of industry? Will they not, in order to amuse their daring spirit, and divert from themselves the effects of their turbulence, be compelled to find them some employment? And what is the employment to which they will most naturally direct their first attention? They will employ them to crush all the remains of courage, loyalty, and piety, that are yet to be found in France; and extinguish all that gallant and unhappy party from whose co-operation we may promise ourselves, at any future period, to derive advantage. What else can be expected from those Moderates, who, though assuming that appellation, have, in succeeding to the party of Robespierre, only established themselves on a new throne of terror? Thus the peace which is in the present instance proposed, as the means of safety, will ultimately only operate to ensure the work of destruction.

"This being my feeling, my objection to asking for peace is, that peace, under the present circumstances, is *not desirable*, unless you can shew that the pressure is greater than, as I shall prove to you from a comparative view of the situation and resources of the two countries, it is.

"But

" But this is but a small part of my objections to the measure. My next objection is, that my Hon. Friend has not told us what sort of peace we are to have; unless, therefore, they state this, I say, that they would reduce us to a gratuitous loss of honour, and an unnecessary despair. On the kind of peace we might obtain, I will ask my Hon. Friend whether he will say that we ought to leave the Austrian Netherlands in the possession of the French?—He will not say so.

" I have heard it stated in passing, that the ground of war has been done away by the Dutch negotiation for peace. However paradoxical it may appear, I assert that the safety of Holland, even if she do make peace, depends on our being at war; for if both countries were at peace, then France would be left without restraint. Who that looks to the proceedings of the Convention, does not see that it is their policy, on every occasion, to keep up their arrogant and menacing system, and to hold a high tone of superiority with respect to all other nations? By these means they have contrived to cherish that spirit of enthusiasm among the people, which has enabled them to make such extraordinary exertions, and on which they depend for the continuance of their power. But who, I would ask, will say that France will make peace on terms, I will not make use of the word moderation, but of concession, when you make peace from a confession of her superiority? And this naturally leads me to an assertion made use of by me during the last session, an assertion not accurately alluded to by an Hon. Baronet, relative to the decree of the National Convention of the 4th April, which states, that the preliminary of peace must be a recognition of the unity and indivisibility of the Republic, on the terms of equality; a decree which has neither been repealed nor modified, and which, if you make peace during its existence, would sign the dissolution of your Parliaments and of your present system of civil society.

" Again, I say, that if this were only an ordinary war, and if after two years you had gained the West India Islands as an indemnification, and had been convinced of the strength of your own resources, and that the means of the enemy were decaying, would you consent to make concessions in order to obtain peace? You received the West India Colonies into your protection, will you then give them back to a foreigner, under which they can have no protection? I say we cannot do this without being convinced that the further continuance of the war could only produce misfortune, misery, and ruin. Will you add something more terrific to the  
Colonies



Colonies than all the horrors of that miserable trade which has peopled those miserable Colonies?

"Before too you made such a surrender, there is another question to be considered: No less than whether you would afford to the French an unresisted opportunity of working upon the unfortunate system that now prevails in that country; and introducing their government of anarchy, the horrors of which are even more dreadful than those of slavery. To those who have in common deplored the miseries of the unfortunate Negroes, it must appear astonishing, that any proposition likely to be attended with such consequences, could ever enter into the mind of my Hon. Friend (Mr. Wilberforce). Besides, it is impossible to ascertain what a wide-spread circle of calamity, the adoption of this proposition may produce. If once the principles of Jacobinism should obtain a footing in the French West India Islands, could we hope that our own would be safe from the contagion? If it has been found scarcely possible to shut out the infection of these principles from the well-tempered, and variously blended orders of society which subsist in this country, where a principle of subordination runs through all the ranks of society, and all are united by a reciprocity of connexion and interest, what may be expected to be their effects operating upon the deplorable system pervading that quarter? It would be giving up your own colonies speedily to be devoted to all the horrors of anarchy and devastation.

"Such would be the *status quo*. That the *status quo* would probably not be accepted, I have before argued. Will the country, therefore, consign itself, if not to the language, at least to the posture, of supplication?

"With respect to our situation, I have not heard it so fully stated as it is my intention to do.

"Of the last campaign I shall not be suspected of a wish to conceal the disasters, to deny the defeats, or to disallow the bad effects of the wounds inflicted on the two great military powers of Europe. But can I forget what the energies and perseverance of Britons have effected in former wars? or that constancy from a point of honour in greater difficulties, has at length produced the object at which it aimed?

"Will any man say, that the bare event of military disasters, and territories taken, is a fair way of weighing the resources of the belligerent Powers? No, not in any wars, and least of all in this, as far as it relates to this country. All wars depend now on the finances of the nations engaged in them. This observation particularly applies to the present war,

was. The balance of resources is in our favour, and I am not putting together what has been and has not been spent in money, but with a view to the present means than the losses of all the together. I have all these difficulties occur here. The first is the at which I am speaking; the second is seized the minds of some persons, that destroy the resources of the enemy have ought not to indulge any speculation, but has been admitted, that we are

"The immense mass of  
than was ever known  
classification.

"The requisition of property."

"The arrest of property."

I say that no man will be in this system unless he is out confessing, that such a system cannot exist in a state of despotism, and supported by terror, and that even in a state of weakness that system of terror, ~~which is the means of the~~ enemy.

France could bear, and that no further creation could take place without producing a depreciation on the value of assignats, and an immoderate increase in the price of provisions. The whole circulating medium of France at the highest, was 90,000,000 sterling. In August 1793, assignats existed to the amount of 140 millions; commerce was then declining; agriculture was discouraged; population checked; a forced loan of forty millions was adopted on the idea, that to the amount of 130 millions they could not maintain assignats in circulation; as early as May or June, assignats had lost nearly half their value. A louis in specie soon afterwards produced 144 livres; then it was, that the system of terror commenced, and that a system of credit was begun, which had its foundation in fear. It may be asked, could any man have imagined that such a plan would have been resorted to? That it was resorted to—that it succeeded, has been proved. Let us look to the principles of it.

“ There was a law which compelled every man to take at par, that which was only worth one sixth of the sum for which it was taken :

“ A law for the *maximum* of the price of all commodities :

“ A law by which no person was permitted to renounce his occupation, under the penalty of twenty years imprisonment.—But you will tell me, that this proves how unlimited the powers and resources of the French are. My reply is, that such a system could neither be undertaken nor succeed but by means which could not last. I will not detain you by detail, but merely mention the other means of terror : The constant activity of the guillotine ; the ferocious despotism of the Deputies on millions. In addition to all the other engines of torture, Cambon, the mouth of the Convention in matters of finance, tells us, that, in every district, there were Revolutionary Committees to watch the execution of the decrees of the Convention, and to enable the Convention to seize the spoil of the people ; the pay of these Committees amounted annually to 26 millions sterling. I say this standing army of Revolutionary Committees is a mean adequate to produce so mighty an end.

“ Let us add now a new creation of assignats of 130 millions, which increased the total to 260 millions. Will any man say, that though the system of terror is done away, the effects can remain? When the system of terror was at an end, the *maximum* ceased to be observed : Assignats were then converted into money, and hence the discount became enormous. The fall of Robespierre took place in July : Three months  
after—

afterwards, the discount was  $\frac{3}{4}$ ths per cent. or 75 on the 100. I have even the authority of Talien for saying that the French cannot maintain their assignats, without contracting their expences and diminishing their forces. The other means to which I have alluded, were the requisition of persons and property. I cannot, at this late hour, state the effects of these means; but let me ask Gentlemen whether they could subsist without a system of terror?

"If, therefore, you are not wanting to yourselves, I say there are sufficient reasons to induce you to a cheerful acquiescence in the Address proposed to you. There are some other points on which I shall not exhaust the patience of the House.

"The French have retired from a system of terror; they are cheering commerce and reviving agriculture!—Are they?—Recollect that it is not so easy to heal such deep wounds. If neither commerce nor agriculture can now flourish, what other resources have they? Can they increase the amount of assignats, or resort to a forced loan?—No. What then have they? Can they restore the system of terror? If Robespierre were raised from the dead, could they revive it? Much, much more difficult must it be to revive it than it was to maintain it.

"And now I come to what appears to me to be an important observation. If you give the French peace, you allow them an interval to collect fresh resources, and to combine new energies. Whereas, if you press them now with vigour, you will reduce them to the necessity of issuing more assignats, and thus rapidly exhaust their resources. It has been well said, that keeping up a large military force is what they cannot bear. I suppose Holland to make peace; I suppose Prussia not to afford us much assistance, and yet I see no reason to believe that, in the next campaign, we cannot increase the British forces on the continent to an amount that shall nearly supply the deficiency of Prussian troops, and act with more effect.

"Other Powers look with attention and anxiety on this night's debate. If you afford to those Powers the means of making large exertions, you will oblige France to make efforts to which she is now unequal. If you act with spirit, I see no reason why the powers of Italy and Spain may not make a diversion, and thereby accelerate that effect which I have before stated; the compelling the French to retire within their own territories."

Mr. Fox said, that fatigued and exhausted as he felt himself, and disgusted as the House must be at hearing a repetition of the same arguments upon which we had been so long involved in a

situation disastrous beyond example, if he did not endeavour to state to the House the necessity of adopting the Amendment, or an amendment of some such nature, he should be wanting in his duty. On the conduct of the war, not a word had been said. The Hon. Baronet who moved the Address, had declined all discussion on that head, expressing his belief that those who were entrusted with conducting it would give the necessary explanations at a future period. The time would come for those explanations, or, at least, for calling for them. At present, he wished Gentlemen to consider the horrible picture which two of his Majesty's ministers had given of our situation; that we were engaged, and must persevere in a contest, the issue of which involved not territory or commerce, not victory or defeat, in the common acceptance of the words, but our constitution, our country, our existence as a nation. Viewing this picture, he was glad that truth and reason had at length found their way to the minds of some men. He should have thought it strange indeed, if, while so many had separated from him in differences of political opinion, there should have been none to adopt the opinions which he still retained. Those who moved and supported the Amendment now, said, that the House of Commons ought not, by their Address to the Crown, to pledge themselves never to agree to a peace with France, while the present republican Government existed. Was this a new doctrine?—Certainly not: But it was new to call upon the House for such a pledge. It was the first time of asking them to assure his Majesty that they would never think it advisable to treat with the French Republic on the present system, unless in a case of such imperious necessity on the part of this country as must preclude all reasoning; and he gave ministers credit for their candour in asking them thus fairly, and without equivocation.

[Mr. Pitt intimated, across the table, that expressions in a former Address pledged the House to this.]

Mr. Fox said, he wished to give the Right Hon. Gentleman some credit for candour, but he so detested the thing that he could not endure even the name. He knew there were expressions in former Addresses that might admit of such a construction, and, aware that they would be so construed, when ministers found it convenient, he had warned, but in vain, the House against adopting them. If in the misfortunes of his country it were possible not to sympathise, he should feel some consolation in observing the effect of double-dealing; of using words in one sense, with the intention of their being understood in another; of courting the support of some upon one interpretation, and of others upon an interpretation directly oppo-

opposite. If the Minister had said candidly and plainly, in the first instance, "This war is undertaken for the express purpose of destroying the French Government, and, come what will, we can never make peace while that Government endures," he might not, perhaps, have had so many supporters; but he would have been saved the unpleasant feelings of this day's difference with his friends. His eagerness to obtain the support of all led him to make use of equivocal words; and now his own friends told him, that they did not interpret these words as he did; that they thought the destruction of the French Government a desirable object, if it could be accomplished on reasonable terms; but that, if they had imagined that peace must never be thought of, till that Government was destroyed, they would not have voted for the war. Here was an instance of the Minister's deriving no advantage from equivocation. Here at length was what he had so often laboured, but without effect, to obtain;—a clear declaration of the precise object of the war, and of the terms on which alone we could hope for peace. This led to the question of policy; and, in proceeding to examine that, he found another instance of ingenuousness. The Speech from the Throne, the mover and the seconder of the Address, admitted that we had experienced disasters in the course of last campaign. The two ministers who had spoken on the subject, both said they would not deny that the enemy had over-run provinces, and taken strong towns. They would not deny!—astonishing candour! The accession of strength and integrity they had gained in the Cabinet inspired such confidence, that they felt bold enough to substitute plain dealing for shuffling and equivocate—and they would not deny that the enemy had over-run provinces, and taken strong towns!—when the true statement was, that never, in any one campaign, since the irruptions of the Goths and Vandals, had such reverses been experienced on the one hand, and such acquisitions made on the other. The French had not only driven the Allies from France, and retaken all the captured fortresses, but were now actually in possession of all the Austrian Netherlands, Dutch Brabant, a considerable part of the United Provinces, all the left bank of the Rhine, except Mentz, part of Piedmont, all the province of Navarre, and much of Biscay and Catalonia.—Then ministers were ready to confess that the French had taken strong towns!—Were so many ever taken in five campaigns in the history of modern Europe? He should be told, it was acting the part of a bad subject to exaggerate the successes of an enemy; he would reply, that he was acting the part of an honest Member of Parliament, in telling the House truths which they ought

to bear, as the only grounds of deciding properly, and reminding them of disasters which (not fortune, but) folly had brought upon the country.

On the means by which the exertions of the French had been hitherto stimulated, much declamation had been wasted. If we were ever to be unfortunately in the same situation with the French, we should then make similar exertions, and not till then. Why not make similar exertions now? Because we had not similar motives. That we were fighting for our constitution, our liberties, religion, and lives, did very well for rounding a period in a speech, but the people would believe none of all this, nor that they who said so believed it themselves. To him it was astonishing how any set of men who did believe it, could have so worked themselves up, as to risk such a war on the wild theories they had nourished, in their own minds, or the applauses of those who were but too ready to applaud upon trust. To hear them, one would think that no nation was at peace with France, or that, if any were, it must already be undone. Was Denmark, Sweden, or even Genoa, notwithstanding our tyrannical conduct towards it, in a state of anarchy, in consequence of being at peace with France? Was America, whose own glorious constitution was founded on the Rights of Man? No such thing.—With America the intercourse of France was great and constant; in America French principles, more than in any other country, the principles of liberty and equality, might be expected to find a genial soil; yet America was so far from being thrown into a state of anarchy by the growth of those dreaded principles, that she has just obtained a very advantageous treaty of amity and commerce with this country—a treaty, as far as he heard of it, which justice and policy would have dictated at any time, but which he feared the difficulties our ministers had involved themselves in, rather than their justice or policy, induced them to give. Why then were we to be so much afraid of peace with France, when so many other nations had made the experiment without any mischievous consequences? When men were attached to theories they shut their eyes against the plainest and the strongest facts. The French revolution had now subsisted five years and a half, and in the sixth year of it we were told that if we were to make peace with the present rulers of France, their terrible principles would spread anarchy and robbery, and bloodshed, not only over this country, but over all the world. Yet though their successes had been brilliant beyond example—and how far success imposes upon the bulk of mankind, the Chancellor of the Exchequer could tell better than most men—except in the petty state of Ge-

neva,

neva, the revolution of which he did not know to be upon French principles, not a single revolution had their example produced. To us, however, it was said that their intercourse in time of peace would be most formidable. From Calais, at Dover, they would land so many missionaries.—What, had they none already here? Had not ministers told the House and the Public, that for more than two years, Jacobin Societies, corresponding with the Jacobin Societies of France, had been labouring with indefatigable zeal to propagate Jacobin principles? Happily these emissaries, who knew the habits, manners, and language of our people, had been labouring without effect; nay he was justified in saying so by ministers themselves; for the King's Speech, for the first time these two years, had nothing of an alarm in it. There must, then, be something in the French language, so agreeable, so soothing, so captivating, so intelligible to English ears, that French emissaries would be sure of success, where English emissaries had laboured in vain for more than two years. On the expression—*acquitted fellow*, which a Right Honourable Gentleman had used, he hoped inadvertently, since he had thought it necessary to explain, he should say nothing of how reprehensible it was, either in a constitutional or moral point of view. Of the societies then in the Right Honourable Gentleman's mind, he believed the truest description had been given from the Bench, *viz.* "That they wanted numbers, arms, money, and even zeal." This, he believed, would be found to be the accurate description of any society, formed in this country for the purpose of overturning the constitution. That there might be a few speculatists in this country, who would prefer another form of government to the present, he had no doubt; there were such in every country; and even these seldom had much zeal. But the English language would not do to seduce the people of England from their allegiance to the constitution.—French emissaries must come over, and inculcate French principles in the French language. They must go among our labourers and manufacturers, and as the calamities of war were insufficient to rouse them, tell them they are now exposed to all the calamities of peace! The Right Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Windham) complained of want of zeal in the country. Surely our soldiers had not fought with less valour, nor our officers acted with less skill, than in any former war. Whatever bravery or conduct could achieve, they had uniformly done; but it must be recollected, that the general exertion of a campaign depends upon the numbers brought into the field. When he formerly made a motion in that House for peace, he found no want of zeal for war, no want of zeal



to cry down any man who had the hardiness to oppose it—at least he found enough, and knew not to what greater length it could have gone, unless they had expelled him the House, or declared him a traitor, as they seemed to think it a laudable practice in other places towards any man who opposed the will of the majority. What was the cause of that zeal? Contempt for the enemy and confidence in their own strength; and the cause being gone, the effect had ceased. Such would ever be the case with zeal founded on false principles. Why were the zeal and exertions of the French less affected by ill success than ours? Ministers would answer—"They force every man into the field who is capable of serving, they strip every other man of whatever they want for the service of the army, and amid misery, wretchedness, and death, they produce an unnatural exertion by means of tyranny and terror."—At the call of necessity, even such means must be resorted to. Were a French army to land in this country, declaring that they would make no peace with us, till we renounced our constitution, and accepted of a form of government according to their fancy, who would deny that every man capable of serving against them should be compelled to service, and that every sacrifice must be made by individuals, to repel the common danger? Such acts in such cases, instead of tyranny become a virtue; and he was surprised to hear men of correct minds deducing arguments from them, of which they ought to be ashamed.—Would we submit, it was asked, to treat with the present government of France? Submit to what? Submit to the French having a bad government? Had we not submitted to this for more than a century? Had we ever found ourselves uneasy under our submission to Persia's having a bad government? Had we not submitted to all the injustice, cruelty, and slaughter, perpetrated in Poland? Then it was asked, "Would we submit to propose peace?" If all the nations were to stand upon this point, no war could ever be concluded, but by the extermination of one or other of the contending parties, for one or other must submit to propose peace. What were all other degradations and submissions but lofty words and unmeaning phrases? We had once said, that we would never treat with the present government of France; take away this impediment to peace, and every advantage we obtained afterwards, if the war must be continued, would be something in our favour; whereas, while that remained, our successes would only stimulate the enemy to fresh exertions, by fresh sufferings and fresh sacrifices, for it was impossible to suppose that the French government would ever negotiate for its own destruction. Would not this give a clear sanction of justice

justice to the war? Would it not produce unanimity with greater zeal and exertion at home, by convincing every man that we were not at war for unreasonable or impracticable objects, but to bring an unreasonable enemy to equitable terms of peace? But what might it not be expected to produce in France, where, as ministers said, the government was perpetually changing from hand to hand, and the loss of power marked the period of life? Ministers were always speculating on the internal affairs of France; why not try a little of this speculation? The Convention, they said, deluded the people, by telling them that they were waging a war of extermination. This event would put an end to the delusion, the people would open their eyes, and the Convention must give them peace, or meet the extermination which they were said to denounce against others. The present state of the war was calamitous beyond example. We had gained Martinico, Guadaloupe, St. Lucia, and part of St. Domingo, in the West Indies, with Corsica, in the Mediterranean. Our allies had lost all he had enumerated in the former part of his speech. If these astonishing exertions of the enemy by land had impeded their exertions by sea, it would be something; but unfortunately the prediction in one of the King's Speeches, that their navy had received an irrecoverable blow at Toulon, was already falsified. Was it not true that a fleet was already sailed from that port superior in point of number to our fleet in the Mediterranean? Their naval exertions at Brest had afforded Lord Howe one of the most glorious triumphs in the annals of our history. If their navy had been such as ministers had represented it at the commencement of the war, *viz.* a navy only upon paper, Lord Howe would not have had the glory of beating an enemy of superior force. But even that blow proved not to be irreparable, for they had now a fleet out which it was doubtful whether we could immediately collect a sufficient force to drive from the English channel. These circumstances were matter of very serious consideration to every man who felt for the honour and the safety of his country. If the war should go on, must we not expect, from what we have seen, that the enemy will again contest with us the superiority at sea? The skill and courage of our navy he confided in as unmatched by any people in the world; but skill and courage could not always compensate for inequality of force; and as our chance of victory was greater, so was our stake. The defeat of the French fleet, as we had so lately experienced, would be of little consequence to the general issue of the campaign, while the defeat of our fleet would be little short of absolute destruction. Why then expose us on  
such

such unequal risk? It was admitted, however, that when disaster had subdued obstinacy and extinguished hope, we must make peace even with the French Republic. Then indeed all that was now imagined of humiliating and degrading would be true; we must throw ourselves at the feet of those we had contemned and reviled, perhaps exasperated, and submit to whatever terms they thought fit to impose. Why expose ourselves to the bare possibility of such ruin? Why not renounce the visionary project of overturning the present government of France? If after that they abused the peace we made with them, we should do as we had done with France before, contend for superiority with the same stake and the same exertion. If asked what terms of peace he would advise, he would answer, that to adjust the terms was the business of ministers, who alone possessed the necessary information. Let them propose such terms as, on a consideration of all the circumstances, of the relative strength of the contending parties, of what might be gained and what lost on either side, they should judge to be fair and equitable; and if these were refused, we should be in a better situation than before, because both parties would know what they were fighting for, and how much the attainment of it was worth.

Another difficulty arose from the French royalists. Thank God, he was innocent of whatever might befall these unfortunate men. He had deprecated the war in the first instance, and after its commencement, every act which could give the French emigrants reason to expect our support in their pretensions upon their own country. Next, it was said, "Will you give up the West India Islands; will you deliver over those men to the vengeance of their implacable enemies, who, as the price of your protection, assisted you in taking those islands?" To these questions, let them answer who had sacrificed the French emigrants fighting in our pay, in almost every garrison we had been compelled to surrender, who had thrown men into situations from which they could not be extricated, nor yet receive the ordinary protection of the laws of war. These might be difficulties to the minister; these might be reasons why he should never be able to extricate himself from the business with honour; but it was the nation's honour, not the minister's, about which he was anxious. The Hon. Baronet who moved the Address, had expressed his hopes of a unanimous vote in support of it. If it were to be voted unanimously, this country could never make peace with honour; if there were a division upon it, part of the country would come out clear. In his Majesty's Speech, there was no mention of allies; it was only said "that his Majesty will omit

no opportunity of concerting the operations of the next campaign, with such of the powers of Europe as are impressed with the same sense of the necessity of vigour and exertion." Who those powers might be we were left to conjecture. The Dutch, however, we were told, were negotiating, and the King of Prussia we knew had failed. The Hon. Gentleman who seconded the Address had given him the credit of predicting this failure; but added that he himself had predicted the fall of Robespierre, and various other matters which had also come to pass. The Hon. Gentleman might have predicted that it would be a dry summer or a rainy autumn; he resigned to him all the honour of prediction. For his own part, he had predicted nothing; he had only used the best arguments he was able, to shew that, from the past conduct of the King of Prussia, there could be no reliance on any engagement he might enter into with us; and the event had shewn, that those arguments were well founded. The minister himself would not now promise us any assistance beyond his contingent as an Elector of the Empire, even on the treaty of 1787. But the Emperor was to make a great augmentation of his forces, by money borrowed on our credit. Why on our credit?—Plainly, because he had no credit of his own. Were there no monied men in the Emperor's dominions? Were the capitalists of Europe so short-sighted, so slow in perceiving the advantages of an Imperial loan, that they could not see them, till pointed out by our government? They saw the advantages; but they would not lend their money, because they knew the borrower was not to be trusted. The loan was neither more nor less than a subsidy under another name, a distinction so flimsy and so trifling, as he hoped never to have seen attempted by the ministers of great potentates. Mark then the desperate situation to which we were reduced. The only ally from whom we had any hopes of efficient aid was the Emperor; and from him, for the enormous sum of six millions, we might get as good and as useful a subsidiary treaty, as was our treaty with the King of Prussia last year. The Emperor, it would be said, had more faith—so it was said of the King of Prussia; but he had very little confidence in the faith of the Cabinet of any absolute Monarch. During the American war, a Noble Marquis then commanding a separate army, expressed his great surprise at finding the people of Virginia so like the people of Carolina. Next year we might have to express our great surprise at finding the King of Bohemia so like the Elector of Brandenburg. He would agree to put the whole argument on the opinion of any experienced officer who had served the last campaign on the continent, whether or not there was any

rational hope of co-operation between the English and the Austrian army. They hated one another more than either hated the French; and from the battle of Tournay, where the Austrians fought the whole day, or rather stood the whole day without fighting, and the enemy were repulsed by a detachment of the British army, their mutual complaints and recriminations had been incessant. But the finances of France were exhausted, and, therefore, we ought to try whose finances would hold out longest. Into this part of the question he would not enter, because we were told the very same thing last year, and on the very same arguments. The King's Speech last year said the resources of the French were rapidly declining; but rapidly was only a relative term—they were again rapidly declining this year; and so they might be ten years hence. The fall of Robespierre—he seemed a great favourite on account of his power—it was said had relaxed the terror, and consequently the energy, of the French system. The fall of Robespierre, from the stress laid upon it, one would think a tale of yesterday; but when we looked at dates, he was put to death on the 27th of July, and since that time there appeared, at least, no relaxation of the French successes.—Moderation, it was contended, must weaken their government and cripple their exertions; he believed no such thing; he looked to general principles, and believed that moderation gave strength. Why, it was asked, were we to look for less co-operation in the interior of France than formerly? Because there was no insurrection at Lyons, Marseilles, Toulon, and he apprehended very little in La Vendée. Our resources, it was said, were not yet touched.—No?—The Speech did not tell us, as last year, that the burdens to be imposed would be little felt by the people, an omission he much regretted, as certainly it was not made in compliment to his arguments on the impropriety of such an insertion. Would the Chancellor of the Exchequer say that if the war was continued another year, the people had yet felt one tenth of the new taxes they must have to bear? Taxes were felt by the poor, and their situation was particularly to be considered, when the object of the war was so equivocal, that it might be doubted whether the attainment of it would be desirable even if it could be attained by making peace. Ministers appeared to know every thing that was passing within France, but nothing that was passing out of it. Of the sailing of fleets from French ports, which it might be worth knowing, they had no information. Just so our hostility seemed to do every thing with France, to raise a tyrant and destroy him, but nothing out of France. The depreciation of assignats was with him an argument of  
little

little weight.—He had been accustomed for years to hear that the paper currency of America was depreciated, not to one half or one fourth of its nominal value, but to nothing. His information, however, differed entirely from that of the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the depreciation of assignats; on the ruined state of French commerce it agreed. But on the state of industry and agriculture it totally disagreed. He was told by American gentlemen, and these by no means partial to French principles, that at no former period had the cultivation of the produce of the soil been near so great. When he heard of the *maximum* and expedients connected with it, he inferred that the misery and distress of the poor must be necessary consequences. He was assured, however, that the poor classes of people in France had now a much greater portion of all that to them constituted the comforts of life, than had ever fallen to their lot before the revolution, or perhaps to the lot of many of the poor of this country. It might be said that his informants were inaccurate observers or false relators—but who were those from whom ministers derived their information? The very persons who deluded themselves, and had an interest in deluding ministers into the prosecution of a hopeless contest. He depended not alone on the accuracy of those with whom he conversed. The circumstances they stated he found confirmed by the pamphlets of French emigrants. But he did not rest his politics on the situation of France, of which his knowledge must be imperfect; he looked to the situation of England, which he had the means of knowing; he saw us involved in a war which must produce increase of debt and taxes, with no compensation even in prospect, and thought the sooner we got out of it the better. Peace, it was said, would be insecure, we should not be able to disarm, because the French could not venture to disband their numerous armies, and bring back so many men without fixed habitations or employment into the heart of the country. Thus were ministers reduced to this curious argument, “We ought to continue the war, because the French have an army which they cannot keep up; and peace would be insecure, because the French have an army which they cannot disband.”—What the effects of peace might be in France, whether the old government would be restored, or a better system established in its room, were speculations which, as a philosopher and philanthropist, he might indulge in, but never as a Member of Parliament, or a Counsellor of his Majesty, adopt as principles of conduct. It was pretended that our hostility had already produced a change of system for the better; but on comparing facts with dates, we should have more reason to say that our hostility

produced the system, with reference to which only the present system was admitted to be better; that our invading France had made Robespierre a tyrant, and our running away destroyed him.

In giving his vote for the Amendment, he should wish to leave out the words, "transactions which have lately happened in France," because we were not to treat with any set of men on account of their good or bad characters, but on account of their possessing the power to treat. If, however, the Gentlemen who moved and seconded the Amendment, should object to leaving out those words, he should vote for it nevertheless.

Our acquisition of Corsica, although mentioned in the Speech, had not been once noticed in the debate. The mode in which we had made the acquisition was curious. If it was valuable to the enemy or important to us, we might fairly take possession of it by right of conquest, as we had done of the West India Islands; but we had not done so. We had done it in a way that illustrated the doctrine in Dr. Price's Sermon, rendered so conspicuous by the notice taken of it in the Reflections on the French Revolution, a book of such excellence, that a Right Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Windham) had recommended reading it over again, having probably done so himself, as he had changed his first opinion of it. His Majesty was once King of North America; he was now King of Corsica—In North America he had been *cashiered*, in Corsica, he had been *elected*—so that the doctrine of electing Kings, and cashiering them for misconduct, was not matter of dangerous theory, but of approved practice. Sir Gilbert Elliot convened the Primary Assemblies of Corsica, they chose Delegates, who met with various other persons, and all had voices that came, so that the election, by his own account, was something very like *universal suffrage*. But this was not all—his Majesty had previously determined not to withhold from the inhabitants of Corsica the protection which they sought for in their spirited efforts to deliver themselves from the yoke of France; and thus was made by his ministers to avow acting upon the famous decree of the French Convention, holding out protection to the inhabitants of all countries who should make efforts to deliver themselves from the yoke of the Government under which they lived—a decree which the mere circumstance of the Convention having passed, without having ever acted upon it, was two years ago held forth as a sufficient cause of war with France. On the propriety of his Majesty's accepting the crown of Corsica, without consulting Parliament, he should say nothing at present; but he had much doubt of its ultimately conducing much

to

to the honour of this country, or contributing to the restoration of peace.

If we were never to treat with the heads of the Convention, but in such extremity, as left no room for choice, when could we look for peace? He wished the Chancellor of the Exchequer would recollect that his honour, and the honour of the country, were two distinct things; and that it was too much to wait till the hour of extremity came, merely that he might be able to say—

—— Potuit quæ plurima virtus,  
Esse fuit——

When he proposed treating, he held it more honourable not to wait till he was beaten into it. The country was already sorely beaten; it had received wounds both deep and wide, but the obstinacy of ministers was not yet conquered. Perhaps, as they thought upon the same principle that it would be dishonourable to restore the conquered West India Islands, they were waiting till the French should retake them. He knew not if this was the intention, but they had given the French ample opportunity.

If it were advisable to go on with the war, let us look at the conduct of it for two campaigns, and what hope could we have of success under the auspices of those who now directed its operations? Lord Chatham had retired from the Admiralty, full of glory, covered with laurels for his able disposition of our naval force, and the active protection he had given to our trade. If the boasts of last year on this subject were true, it was unfair to check his Lordship in the career of his glory, and unjust to deprive the country of his services at so important a crisis. But they were not true, his retiring was a confession of incapacity or negligence; and if he had delayed it much longer, there would have been petitions for his removal. To the West Indies such a force had been sent as nothing but the great abilities of the officers who commanded could have enabled to take the French Islands, and, when taken, was insufficient to defend them. To Toulon such a force was sent, as was too small for defence, and too great for retreat with honour. The projected invasion had been kept alive from year to year, and served only to weaken our force in quarters where it ought to have been strong, without even an attempt to carry it into execution. Were our cause as good as our resources were said to be inexhaustible, with such weakness, such want of system, such hesitating, wavering incapacity in the direction of our force, we could hope for no success.



If the Hon. Gentleman who moved the Amendment, and his friends (for the Hon. Gentleman he felt great respect, on account of the part he had taken in the abolition of the Slave Trade, a measure in which he felt deeply interested), thought that, in consequence of their aiding him to obtain a speedy peace, peace might be made, without an inquiry into the causes of the war, he gave them notice that he would receive support upon no such terms. He would never forego inquiry into the causes of the war, and measures to prevent similar calamities in future. This was due to the people, left in the enjoyment of peace they should forget their former sufferings from war, and again yield themselves up to delusion. Both the present and the American war were owing to a Court party in this country, that hated the very name of liberty; and to an indifference, amounting to barbarity, in the minister, to the distresses of the people.—It was some consolation to him that he had done his utmost to prevent the war; and to know that those who provoked it could not but feel, even while they were endeavouring to persuade others of the contrary, that they must, in no very long space of time, adopt the very course which he was recommending as fit to be adopted now.

In the Speech, not a word was said of the navy.—He should only observe, that in our present circumstances the neglect of building a single ship that could possibly be built, was a neglect highly criminal.

*Mr. Jolliffe* said, that on hearing the Address he could by no means approve it, because it pledged the House and every individual who voted for it, to a full and unequivocal support of the war so long as ministers should please to carry it on, without any limit in point of duration, or any bounds in point of expence—that the minister had, indeed, in some degree relieved his mind by admitting that he would, under certain circumstances, feel himself at liberty to treat with the ministers of a French Republic. This, *Mr. Jolliffe* said, he rejoiced to hear, because he feared he would have no opportunity of treating with any other. But he disapproved the Address, because the language was too expressive of war—and because he was anxious for peace, which he certainly was as much as any man in the kingdom. He must much more strongly oppose the Amendment, because it either put a treaty of peace totally out of sight and beyond expectation, or made it necessary to accept of any terms that the French might think proper to impose. Would any man, involved in a contest, finding his estate unable to support the expence, and his friends refusing assistance, or a nation whose resources were exhausted and whose allies forsook them, as was stated to be the case with us, publicly

publicly proclaim their situation, in order to induce their adversaries to accommodate their differences on just and equitable grounds? Would they not rather rely on their agents or ministers to obtain the best terms for them in their power? The contrary conduct must produce the loss of the object they professed to be desirous of attaining. They must either have confidence in their ministers to trust to their negotiation, or supposing them incapable, they must remove them from their offices.—This Amendment went directly to that object, and it would have been more liberal and candid in the Honourable Mover of it, to have addressed the Crown to remove from his office the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for whom he expressed friendship and regard, than either to compel his resignation of his office, or place him in a situation the most degrading that could be conceived—namely, to treat for peace with a compulsion to agree. Mr. Jolliffe said, it was not material to him which of the Right Hon. Gentlemen, Mr. Pitt or Mr. Fox, filled that situation, but it was very material to him and to the country, that they should, neither of them, be fettered and tied down to the most ignominious of all situations. From an anxious desire for an honourable and permanent peace, he found himself compelled to resist the Amendment.

Mr. Dundas rose to vindicate the Noble Earl (Chatham) in his absence, and declared that he should be ready to meet and discuss fairly all the points the Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Fox) might think proper to bring forward respecting the mismanagement attributed to his Majesty's ministers. On the subject of the West Indies, and the other matters introduced in the debate, he should be ready to give answers when they came again before the House; but at that late hour, he declined entering on them. In justification of the late Lord of the Admiralty, however, he begged to say a few words.

At no period had our navy been increased with more rapidity and ability, or had it been more superior to that of the enemy, or more successful. During Lord Chatham's naval administration we had taken or destroyed 20 ships of the line; 20 frigates from 44 to 32 guns; 8 frigates of less force, and 28 other vessels of war: While, on the contrary, the French had only taken and destroyed of our ships, one of the line, the *Alexander*; two frigates of more than 32 guns; one smaller frigate, and 16 other ships of war. Whenever an opportunity had offered, our navy had triumphed, and they could do no more; the enemy had no commerce, and therefore we could take no merchantmen; but on the contrary, our commerce was so flourishing, that it afforded them many opportunities of making captures.

Our

Our exports and imports were, he said, never higher, and not only our commerce, but our revenue and our manufactures, were in a very flourishing state. He applauded Lord Chatham's conduct in the Admiralty, and did not wish Earl Spencer's to be more deserving of praise.

*Mr. Sheridan* said, he would not trouble the House at that late hour, on the general topics of the debate. He had attempted twice to be heard, as he was very desirous of delivering his sentiments on the important question before the House; but the last time it had been judged most proper to prefer hearing the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on account of his indisposition. He would, therefore, at present, only remark, that if Lord Chatham had been so very able a minister, it was highly improper to remove him: But he thought it a public misfortune that no inquiry was instituted into his conduct, which he was convinced would be proved to be very different from what the Right Hon. Gentleman who had just sat down had represented it; and had he continued in office much longer, he had good grounds for believing that a petition would have soon been presented to the King, from the merchants and other commercial men in the city of London, for his removal.

*Mr. Brandling* said a few words, which were not distinctly heard either by the Members of the House, or the strangers.

At four o'clock the House divided, when there appeared,

<i>Ayes</i> (for the Amendment)	-	73
<i>Noes</i> (against it)	-	246

Majority for carrying on the war 173

The original Address was then put and carried.

Adjourned.

*List of the Minority on Mr. Wilberforce's Amendment to the Address to negotiate a Peace with France.*

Anson, Thomas	Litchfield	Byng, George	Middlesex Co.
Anderson, J. W.	City of London	Church, J. B.	Wendover
Antonie, Lee	Great Marlow	Coke, T. W.	Norfolk Co.
Aubrey, Sir John	Clitheroe	Coke, Edward	Derby
Banks, Henry	Corff Castle	Colquhoun, Wm.	Bedford
Baring, Sir Francis	Chipping Wycombe	Courtenay, John	Tamworth
Barrham, J. Forster	Stockbridge	Coxe, H. Hippeley	Somersetshire
Bouverie, Hon. E.	Northampton	Curwen, C.	Carlisle
Bouverie, Hon. W.	New Sarum	Davers, Sir Charles	Bury St. Edmunds
Bullock, John	Essex County	Duncombe, Henry	Yorkshire
Burdon, Rowland	Durham Co.	Erskine, Hon. T.	Portsmouth
Burch, J. R.	Thetford	Featherston, Sir H.	Ditto

Fitz-

Fitzpatrick, Right Hon. R.	Tavistock	Mainwaring, Wm.	Middlesex Co.
Fletcher, Sir Henry, Cumberland County		Martin, James	Tewkesbury
Folkes, Sir M. B.	King's Lynn	Milner, Sir W.	York City
Foley, Hon. E.	Worcestershire	Milbanke, Ralph	Durham Co.
Fox, Rt. Hon. C. J.	Westminster	Mostyn, Sir R.	Flintshire
Francis, Philip	Blechingly	North, Dudley	Great Grimsby
Garlies, Lord	Saltaſh	Peirſe, Henry	Northallerton
Grey, Charles	Northumberland	Plumer, William	Hertfordſhire
		Ruffel, Lord W.	Surrey County
		Sheridan, R. B.	Stafford Town
Hare, James	Knareſborough	Shaw, Cunliffe	Pretton
Harcourt, John	Ilcheſter	Smith, William	Camelford
Hill, Sir Richard	Shropſhire	Spencer, Lord R.	Wareham
Howard, Henry	Arundel	Sturt, Charles	Bridport
Huffey, William	New Sarum	Taylor, M. A.	Pole
Jekyl, Joſeph	Calne	Taylor, Clement	Maidſtone
St. John, St. Andrew	Bedfordſhire	Tarleton, General	Liverpool
Kempe, Thomas	Lewes	Thompson, T.	Eveſham
Langton, John	Bridgewater	Thornton, Robert	Colcheſter
Lambton, W. H.	Durham City	Thornton, Henry	Southwark
Lemon, Sir W.	Cornwall	Townſhend, Lord J.	Knareſborough
Lechmere, Edmond	Worceſter City	Walwyn, James	Hereford Town
Long, Samuel	Ilcheſter	Western, C. C.	Malden
Ludlow, Earl	Huntingdonſhire	Wilbraham, Roger	Bodmyn
		Wilberforce, W.	Yorkſhire
McLeod, Col. N.	Inverneſſhire	Wynne, R. Watkin	Denbiſhſhire

## TELLERS.

Maitland, Hon. Thomas  
Whitbread, Samuel, jun.

Jedburgh, &c.  
Bedford Town.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS.

WEDNESDAY, December 31.

Several Members took the oaths and their seats.

*The Speaker* acquainted the House, that he had received a letter from Lord Hood, from on board the *Victory*, acknowledging the receipt of the Speaker's letter, conveying the Thanks of the House to his Lordship, for his public services, &c.

*The Speaker* said also, that a similar Letter of Thanks had been written by him to Sir Charles Grey and Sir John Jervis, in the West Indies, but, owing to the expectation of their speedy return, the letter was not transmitted; which was the reason he had no acknowledgment from them.

A new writ was ordered for Hindon, in the county of Wilts, in the room of William Beckford, Esq. who has accepted of the Stewardship of the Chiltern Hundreds.

*Sir Edward Knatchbull* brought up the Report of the Address agreed on by the House to be presented to his Majesty in return for his Speech.

The Address was read a first and second time and agreed to, and a Committee of such Members as are of the Privy Council was ordered to wait on the King, to learn when his Majesty would be pleased to receive the Address.

The common orders of the House being read, and some private petitions received, the House adjourned.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THURSDAY, Jan. 1.

*Lord Stoford* reported that his Majesty had appointed three o'clock to-day to receive the Address.

The House, on the motion of *Mr. Rose*, ordered, that it do resolve itself into a Committee of Supply to-morrow.

A new writ was ordered for *Morpeth*, in the room of *Francis Gregg, Esq.*; he having accepted the Chiltern Hundreds.

The House ordered that no private petitions should be received after the 6th of February next.

Adjourned.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS.

FRIDAY, Jan. 2.

*Mr. Speaker* reported to the House, that the House attended his Majesty yesterday, with their Address; to which his Majesty was pleased to give this most gracious answer:

"Gentlemen,

"I return you my most cordial thanks for this loyal and dutiful Address, and for the affectionate sentiments which you express on the approaching marriage of my son the Prince of Wales.

"The assurances of your continued and zealous support in the important contest in which we are engaged, afford me the greatest satisfaction.

"Your firmness and perseverance, and the spirit and exertions of my people, can alone lead to a successful and honourable termination of the war, and to the firm establishment of general tranquillity."

## HABEAS CORPUS.

*Mr. Sheridan* reminded the House of what he had taken the liberty of saying on the first day of the session, touching a matter, in his opinion, of the first importance to every British subject: He rose, therefore, now to give notice, that he should take the earliest opportunity he could of formally submitting to that House a question,—Whether the *Habeas Corpus*

Act, and all the advantages which the people of this country had derived under it, should or should not be restored; and whether the respect and veneration with which we had been accustomed to regard the Trial by Jury, and the esteem and deference which had been generally given to verdicts, should be continued, or be entirely eradicated from the public mind?—The House would immediately perceive, that he alluded to the Bill for the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act, which had passed under an idea of a plot existing in this country, and of the decision of a jury that no such plot existed. He therefore gave notice, that on the ensuing Monday he should move for leave to bring in “a Bill to repeal the Act of the last Session of Parliament, for the Suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act.”

#### THE NAVY.

*Mr. Morris Robinson* said, he wished to call the attention of the House to a matter of no inconsiderable importance. It had been pretty generally asserted, that the French had, at this time, a superiority over us at sea, and while that was the case we must be in a very dangerous situation. He wished that we should be able to call those who had any command in our navy to be responsible for their conduct; this could never be the case while they had any excuse, and a good one they must have while the enemy was superior to us, upon what had been boasted of, as our own element. There was a new First Lord of the Admiralty, and, therefore, he thought some step should be taken to change our system, and to put the navy of England in a proper state. He could not, he said, help observing, that the vast sum of money which he understood the minister intended to give to the Emperor towards carrying on the war, would be better employed in augmenting our naval force; and, if he found the House concurring with him in that idea, he should bring forward a motion to that effect, of which he would then give notice; but first, he wanted to be informed, by any one present, who had a share in the department of government to which this matter immediately applied, whether any thing had been determined upon in that respect?

A silence for some time having ensued, *Mr. Robinson* said, possibly the Lords of the Admiralty did not think that the subject was worthy their attention.

*The Speaker* said, he was sorry to interrupt the Hon. Member, but he must suggest, that the only regular mode of proceeding was, either to make a motion, or to give notice that a motion should be made on a future day.

*Mr. Robinson* then gave notice, that he should make a motion on the state of the navy on the following Tuesday.

*Mr. Sheridan* observed, that perhaps the House was waiting for the minister. A question of great importance, respecting the navy of Great Britain, had been put; and the Lords of the Admiralty did not think it worth their while to answer. He, in consequence, felt himself to be in an unpleasant situation, having a matter of importance, and particularly interesting to the city of London, to bring forward; but he did not see any of the Members for that city in their places: Perhaps they too, like the Lords of the Admiralty, might think it beneath their dignity to attend to what might be deemed their particular duty. He, however, gave notice, that on Monday he should have a motion to make, relative to the City Militia &c.

#### HOURS OF PUBLIC BUSINESS.

*The Speaker* informed the House, that he should adopt, for this Session, the same regulation, with regard to business, as he observed in the last, which was, that public business should commence at four o'clock.

A petition was presented on behalf of the electors of the borough of Seaford, praying that the decision of the last Committee, upon the question of right of election, might not be established.

Ordered to be taken into consideration on the 10th of February next.

#### COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY.

The order of the House being read, the House resolved itself into a Committee of the whole House, to consider of a Supply to be granted to his Majesty:—*Mr. Hobart* in the Chair.

*Mr. Fox* wished the House to be informed as accurately as possible, when the subject of the loan was to be discussed, and more particularly the loan to the Emperor. It was a subject of very great importance, and it was extremely necessary that the House should have the earliest information, and the longest notice possible upon the subject, for he apprehended that a great deal of discussion would belong to it. He said this, as well on account of the unusual season of the year when Parliament had been convened, which had rendered the immediate attendance of many Members impossible, without great inconvenience, as because he was apprehensive that many Gentlemen would soon be called to their public duty in the quarter session all over the kingdom. He wished, therefore, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had been present to name the day

day on which he meant to bring forward the subject, that Gentlemen, obliged to go out of town, might regulate their return accordingly.

*Mr. Rose* said, the business would soon come regularly before the House, when the Ways and Means, that was, when the Budget, came forward to be opened, of which his Right Hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, would give due notice as he usually did; he could not give a precise answer in the absence of his Right Hon. Friend, who did not expect that any material discussion would take place to-day, or he would have attended. However, he would venture to say, that a notice would be given in 14 or 16 days previous to the opening of the Budget. Had he been aware of what had just been said, he would have procured information of his Right Hon. Friend, who, however, would be in the House on Monday, and would, most likely, give notice, on that day, when the Budget would be brought forward.

*Mr. Fox* said, he had conceived that the subject of the loan would have been brought forward previous to the opening of the Budget. It was exceedingly necessary that as early a notice as possible should be given of this very important matter; for there were to his knowledge, as he had said before, many Gentlemen who would soon be called into the country upon public business.

*Mr. Rose* said, he should have been happy if he was able to satisfy the Right Hon. Gentleman, but he had no doubt his Right Hon. Friend would be in the House on Monday, and give the necessary information upon that or any other subject that was intended to be brought before the House.

*Mr. Sheridan* said, that it was quite an unfortunate day for information. A question had been put to the Lords of the Admiralty, upon the state of the navy, and they had remained silent; he had something to ask of the Members for the city of London, but they were not present; his Right Hon. Friend wanted information upon the loan—the minister was absent, and the only answer was, “That there would be time between this and Monday, for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to make up his mind upon the matter.” The truth was, that the minister did not rely on any thing that might relate to the rules and forms of the House. He had no respect for either. When a question concerning a supply, to be granted for carrying on the war, came on, the Chancellor of the Exchequer was absent; for it was with him as a mere matter of course:—He would come at a future time to tell the House how he intended to dispose of the supply. Most unquestionably, in point of decency, the Chancellor of the Exchequer ought



ought to be present: But that was out of the question; for all the proceedings of granting supplies were such as he expected not to be debated.—They were to be granted as of course; and no information was to be had on points to which such supplies related.

*Mr. Rose* said, that the Hon. Gentleman had chosen to misunderstand him. He had said, in answer to a question, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would do on this as he had done on other occasions of the same nature—give notice of it fourteen or sixteen days previous to his bringing the Budget forward, and he could not give any better information. As to the business before the House at that time, namely, the vote of supply, it was not particularly the business of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to move it, according to the practice which had obtained in the House for some time, he himself (*Mr. Rose* said) having moved these resolutions, almost invariably, and it was to be considered in some sense as a matter of course, the resolution being nothing more than this—"Resolved, that it is the opinion of this Committee, that a supply be granted to his Majesty." Upon such a resolution he owned he did not see how there could be much difference, although Gentlemen might afterwards differ about the extent of that supply.

*Mr. Stetidan* replied, that the Hon. Gentleman who spoke last, he had no doubt, would not give the House any information before he was prompted by the minister; in his endeavours, however, to make an excuse for the minister, he made the case rather worse than before; he had said that it had been the custom of late years for him to move the resolution, instead of the Chancellor of the Exchequer; if that was a custom, it was a very bad one, it was introduced by the minister, and he was welcome to the merit of it. But he did not at all misunderstand the minister upon this occasion; he treated all the forms of the House with contempt. He had in the very subject to which his Right Hon. Friend's question alluded, acted in the most unconstitutional manner, he had agreed for the loan previous to the meeting of Parliament; he should not, therefore, wish to hear any more about forms, he should stay until he had an opportunity on Monday of hearing the principal, as his agent was not sufficiently prompted to give an intelligible answer.

*Mr. Steele* thought it was unfair in the Hon. Gentleman to make this severe and unwarrantable attack on his Right Hon. Friend in his absence.—He did not mean to say that he was not ready to make his attacks in his presence; on the contrary, he was ready to acknowledge that he was never shy or backward

ward on such occasions, but really he thought this sort of severity unwarrantable and unworthy. What had his Right Hon. Friend done in this loan different from any of the former loans? He had entered into a considerable engagement with certain individuals, and he afterwards was to come to that House for its opinion in the usual way, upon which the House would exercise its own judgment. This was always the case in loans, and not only in loans, but also in every subsidiary treaty that was ever entered into between this and any other state.

*Mr. Fox* pointed out a striking difference between bargaining for a loan and entering into a treaty. The case of a treaty was that of an act of royal authority and prerogative; but the case of a loan was a bargain between the minister and individuals on behalf of the country, on which that House, as holding the purse of the nation, had a right to be consulted as soon as possible after the minister felt inclined to listen to the terms proposed. Between the two there was not the smallest connexion or resemblance.

*Mr. Steele* said, that whether the loan was a good or a bad one, and what would be the opinion of the House upon that subject, would be best known when the subject came before the House; but he thought that any insinuations against the minister in his absence were not fair.

*Mr. Francis* observed, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had taken credit to himself for having adopted a plan with regard to the loan which favoured competition among monied men, by throwing, as it were, his door open to all bidders. Upon the last loan *Mr. Francis* thought that the minister had departed from the plan of which he boasted so much, and instead of throwing his door open to all bidders, he kept it shut against all persons, except those whom he was pleased to favour.

*Mr. Sheridan* said, he did not chuse to go into the discussion of this business at this time, because the Chancellor of the Exchequer was not present; but he must say that the Right Hon. Gentleman who had objected to it on account of the minister's absence, had done him no more than justice when he said, he was ready to attack the minister to his face; that he certainly was, and that he had much rather do than say any thing relating to him in his absence; but the minister's absence from his duty in that House was his own fault, and if any thing that was said seemed to bear hardly upon him, there was nobody but himself to blame for it—[At this time *Mr. Pitt* entered]—and *Mr. Sheridan* proceeded to observe upon the loan, and said, that the idea of giving to the Emperor,

peror, after what we had already known of him, the most enormous sum of six millions sterling for continuing the war, was such a thing as he did not think any man would come to that House to propose without a mask; for, he should really be curious to see the bare face of the man who could propose so enormous and bare-faced a plunder of the people of this country; and when he should see that, he should endeavour to deliver his sentiments upon the subject.

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that not having had the good fortune to be present at the former part of the conversation, he was not a little surprised on coming into the House to hear what was the subject and tone of discussion. There was at present before the House no consideration of the extent of the supply, of the means by which it was to be raised, or the purposes to which it was to be applied. When he recollected also that notwithstanding the difference of political sentiment on the first day of the session, even those Gentlemen who had supported the Amendment, had professed themselves disposed to grant a large and liberal supply to his Majesty, and that the Hon. Gentleman was one of that number, he was still more astonished at the angry tone of opposition which he assumed on the present occasion. He would not enter into the subject which had been started respecting the loan to the Emperor that day, because another period would come with more propriety for its discussion. The Hon. Gentleman had said that no man would be bare-faced enough to come forward to that House, and avow such a transaction. With respect to himself, he would be bare-faced enough in the course of the present contest to adopt and to avow any measure which he considered would be for the good of the country. It had been thought by him, as well as by others, who were impressed with the same views, of the necessity of continuing the present contest, that if the Emperor should be prevailed upon to make exertions in the way of bringing forward a large force, and if this country should grant him the pecuniary and necessary means for that purpose, it would be the most likely method to render the present contest successful; and this opinion appeared to be sanctioned both by the nature of the thing, the situation of Europe, and the admission of the enemy themselves. With respect to the negotiation for a loan, neither the extent of that loan, the sum for the use of the Emperor, nor the terms on which it was to be granted, were that day in agitation. Nothing had been settled on any of these points, which did not place Parliament in exactly the same situation in which it would have been placed, if no such negotiation had been brought forward. The only difference

ference was, that such a negotiation having once been brought forward, it would not be advisable to depart from the terms upon which it had been concerted, except upon very strong grounds of objection, as the deviation would be attended with great public inconvenience. The only difference then between former transactions of the same sort, and the present, was, that in former instances it had been usual to concert the terms of a loan only a few days before it was submitted to Parliament, and that in the present instance a longer space had been suffered to intervene. Any opposition, however, from this circumstance, he did not expect to have heard in that House, as he conceived it would have died away with the few newspaper paragraphs, in which it originated. As to the time on which he should be able to discuss the subject of the loan to the Emperor, it was impossible at present to fix any precise period, as it must necessarily depend on the result of negotiation, and on the circumstance how far his Majesty should be satisfied with respect to the nature of that assistance and co-operation which the Emperor might be disposed to afford. He could only state that since he had been last in the House he had greater reason to be persuaded that the Emperor would be disposed to afford that entire co-operation which this country should require. Before, however, the treaty could be finally concluded, it might be necessary for him to propose to Parliament the provisional supply to be made, if such a treaty should take place, of which he hoped to be able to give notice on Monday.

*Mr. Fox* said, the Right Hon. Gentleman had insinuated, that all those who had voted for the Amendment were pledged also to vote for the supply. No such thing was the case; they would have been pledged indeed to vote for the supply, if their Amendment had been adopted, and they could have had the prospect that the money of their constituents was to be applied for the rational purpose of bringing about a peace, and not, as at present, for the desperate object of carrying on an eternal and unextinguishable war. With respect to the question of time, the terms of a loan had commonly been submitted to Parliament three or four days after they were settled, and even sometimes sooner; but when the time was extended from one day to five, and from five days to perhaps as many weeks, the case was entirely altered. He would not then discuss the terms of the loan, though he had not yet forgotten the extravagant terms of the loan for last year. But his principal objection to the measure was, its being a source of corruption. He would not inquire to whom the loan was given. Many of the subscribers were useful Members of that

VOL. I. S House,

House, and he had no wish to exclude the monied interest from a share in their deliberations. But it was to be recollected that the interest which they had in this transaction, from an advance in the price of stocks, might influence not only their approbation of the particular measure, but even bear on every vote which they should give on the question of supply. It was a constitutional principle, that the ways and means should not be voted, before the House had decided on the extent of the supply; in this instance the ways and means were provided, before the House had been called to consider of the supply at all. There was another circumstance to be considered, How far, after the experience we had had of the subsidy granted to the King of Prussia, we ought to be prepared to go on with the same system, and grant a subsidy to the Emperor, under the name of a guarantee? No fresh proof was surely wanting to convince us, how little reliance we could place on the faith of continental treaties, in the prosecution of the present war. But then the Right Hon. Gentleman had contended, that the negotiation into which he had entered was only provisional, and left the point quite undecided. It surely could not be either way equal; there must be a difference of advantage in bargaining for eighteen, and for twenty-four millions, which would give to those concerned an interest in voting for the one proposition, rather than the other. If it had always been considered as a duty of the Members of that House, to be jealous of the means of increasing corrupt influence, he could not but consider the present system as entirely calculated for that purpose, and intended to give additional force to that machine, which was already but too powerful. In a financial point of view, the Right Hon. Gentleman had contended that the House were not bound to adopt the terms for which he had bargained. Undoubtedly not;—but at the same time he had admitted that it might be attended with extreme inconvenience to give them up. There were only two considerations to be attended to on this part of the question. If when Parliament should be called to sanction the loan, the price of stocks should be such as to render the bargain highly gainful to the proprietors, the necessity of keeping the faith of Government to those, who had made their terms when the price of stocks was so much lower, would then be urged, and that they would have the reflection that they were giving their sanction to stipulations much less advantageous to the Public than they might otherwise have been. If the price of stocks should have fallen so as to render the transaction extremely disadvantageous to the proprietors, he did not conceive that there was any thing binding

binding upon individuals, more than upon Parliament, to fulfil the provisional bargain; he at least knew of no law to compel them to make good the terms, for which they had stipulated. And if the circumstances were peculiarly unfavourable, even though they had the will, yet they might not have the power to fulfil their engagements. The Right Hon. Gentleman contended, that he had only done what had been customary on such occasions, and the only difference was in the point of time; but in a transaction of this nature, the consideration of seven hours, or of seven weeks, surely formed a very material difference. Mr. Fox then urged that the time of voting the supply was a very proper period for discussing such objections. He renewed his wish that notice might be given of the day on which the business of the loan to the Emperor should be agitated, and for the sake of the country gentlemen, that it might be fixed at as distant a period as possible. He was desirous that it might not be confounded with the Budget, but treated as a separate question. If introduced in the Budget, it would lead the attention of the House from the discussion of the particular terms to be granted to the Emperor in the present instance, to the general proposition, whether in any case it was fitting that pecuniary assistance should be granted to him from this country. He wished then that the question of the particular terms proposed might be discussed before the House should be called to decide on the subject of the loan, and that as long an interval as possible might be allowed previous to this discussion, so as to admit, if it could conveniently be done, of a call of the House.

*Mr. Burdon* said, that though he voted for the Amendment on the first day of the session, he did not consider himself as the less bound to support the vigorous prosecution of the war, by readily granting the supplies. He was of opinion that terms of peace, even if held out by us, would not be accepted by the French, and he only wished that we might adopt a moderate and pacific language, in order to fix upon them all the crime and odium of carrying on the war.

*Mr. Fox* said that he also should certainly vote the supplies. The only difference was, that if the Amendment for peace had been adopted, he should have done it with a good heart, and a sanguine feeling, in the view that they would be applied to a good purpose; whereas he should now, he confessed, vote away the money of his constituents under very different impressions, and with very different prospects.

*Mr. Samuel Thornton* said, that he would have supported the Address on the first day of the session, if it had held a pacific language, or even professed a readiness to adopt nego-

tiation. He was indeed of opinion that every year during the continuance of hostilities, we should make an offer of peace to the enemy, provided they should be disposed to remove the grounds of war. What had displeased him in the language of ministers was, that they seemed to hold out no other termination of the war than the destruction of the present French government, an object which he believed would never be effected by the force of arms. Now that the question was decided to carry on the war, he was ready to support it. Every way, indeed, he saw danger, both in adopting negotiation and persisting in hostilities; but if the war was to be carried on at all, he was sensible, from a view of the difficulties of our situation and the force of the enemy whom we had to oppose, that it could only be carried on by a large and extended scale of operations. He declared that he had not a shilling directly or indirectly in the loan; he disapproved of any insinuations of corrupt influence; the negotiation respecting it he believed to be strictly honourable in all the parties; and concluded with promising his hearty support to the motion.

*Mr. Fox* explained, that there had existed times, in which there had been just grounds of jealousy with respect to corrupt influence; and that it became a constitutional duty of every Member to exercise suspicion and vigilance with respect to whatever might have a tendency to introduce so destructive a principle into the House of Commons, or add to the force which it might have already acquired, more especially when the transaction assumed so questionable a shape as the present loan, from the particular time and circumstances in which it was brought forward.

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* stated, that he regretted the difference of opinion which on a former night had taken place between himself and an Hon. Gentleman (*Mr. St. Thornton*), who had on this occasion stated the grounds of the difference in a manner very honourable to himself, and very fair to the Public. The Hon. Gentleman considered it as a proper measure to offer peace, even with a view to carrying on the war; he must own that under the present circumstances he entertained the directly contrary opinion. At the same time he had given an example to those who had supported the Amendment from similar views, by shewing his determination to strengthen the hands of the Executive Government, and to countenance every measure that might give effect to the exertions of the country. With respect to the Austrian loan, he had no hesitation to discuss the expediency of such a step with any Member who was desirous that the operations of the war should

should be vigorously and effectually carried on. But, though he had no objection to discuss that measure separately, it must necessarily form a part of his Budget, as, in the detail which he should then submit to the House, he should be obliged to look to the alternative of such a sum to be granted to the Emperor, and to make a suitable provision, if the treaty should be carried into effect. He should, in all probability, bring forward his Budget on Wednesday the 21st inst. He could not blame any Member for looking with jealousy and suspicion to any measure that might, in his opinion, have a tendency to increase the means of corrupt influence; but he defied any one to point out a single step that had been taken, in the negotiation respecting the loan, that had any such tendency. For his own part, he knew not the persons who might have shares in the loan.—But how could such a circumstance induce the proprietors to support the continuance of the war, from the prospect of advantage, when, on the contrary, every rumour of peace, however slight or unfounded, was found to have the effect of raising the price? He had been induced to concert the terms of the loans so much sooner than usual, because, before he could make any specific proposal to the Emperor, it was necessary to ascertain what effect the loan granted to him, might have on the loan requisite for the Government of this country; and this could only be done by a provisional bargain, as in the present instance, afterwards to be submitted to Parliament.

*Mr. Wilberforce* owned he felt an inclination in favour of a vote for a supply. He retained the opinion which he had already delivered on the war itself; but as the House of Commons had entered into a resolution for carrying it on, the question then was, not whether we should go on with the war, that was determined in the affirmative, but whether we should have a vigorous or languid war, and in that view of the subject, he felt himself bound to grant large supplies; this he did because the House was determined to carry on the war, not because he himself wished the war to continue, but because he could not prevent it; and he must again protest that the more he thought upon the subject, the more he was convinced of the necessity of peace on the part of this country.

*Mr. Duncombe* shortly expressed his concurrence in the sentiments of the last Honourable Speaker, as to his approbation of peace; but declared, he felt a persuasion that if the war was to be persisted in, it ought to be prosecuted with vigour.

*Mr. Fox* declared, he still retained his sentiments with respect to the influence of the Members of the House, and the necessity there was for viewing all these things with a jealous and



and a watchful eye. With regard to the question of supply then before the Committee, he agreed that a supply must be had, and perhaps he might be of opinion that it ought to be granted to the extent proposed; but that was nothing as to the application of it, or the jealousy of the House as to the influence to be created by it. He took notice of the observation of the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the effect which the rumour of peace always had to raise the price of stock, and thereby render the loan more advantageous to the proprietors; but he asked how this argument applied with respect to the Imperial loan, which depended on the supposition that the war was to be continued, and which was a measure entirely without any prospect of peace. He agreed that this war, if it must be continued, should be a war of great vigour; but then as to the nature of that vigour, he might think the subsidy to the Emperor a thing entirely useless, and the whole six millions to be paid for nothing, from the circumstance of the Electors of Germany having so generally signified their wishes for peace at the Diet of the Empire, and because he was of opinion that the whole of our vigour ought to be in the navy; and if there was a place in this island, in which it was possible to build a ship, and a ship was not built; if there was one man employed in the army, who could be of any service in the navy; if one shilling was bestowed to purchase any thing for the army, which might have been laid out for the navy; then ministers were proceeding upon a system, which if followed much longer, we should drive ourselves to utter and irretrievable ruin. It was for the navy, that the whole extent of our supply, be it ever so large, ought to be employed.

*Mr. Barham* also agreed that the supply should be a large one, if the war was to be carried on; but he thought we ought to negotiate for a peace.

*Mr. Martin* expressed his most hearty concurrence in the sentiments of *Mr. Fox* with regard to the navy. He deplored the hardships to which the inhabitants of that part of Europe which had so long been the seat of war, were exposed; and he declared he saw no reason why, on our part, the whole contest should not be confined to the sea.

*Sir William Milner* said, he had voted for the Amendment on a former evening, because he conceived, from the language of different Proclamations, that the French must suppose England would not make peace until the old government be restored. It seemed to be the determination at present of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, not to treat with any but a monarchical government. Nor was it the Chancellor of the Exchequer's determination only, but that of all the Members of Administration.

Administration. Sir William was sorry to differ from men, with whom he had lived in friendship, and with whom he had studied politics under the same master, the Marquis of Rockingham.

Sir William wished for a negotiation for peace. He said he dreaded the effect of sending six millions to the Emperor; he was afraid it would lessen the value of land in this country to an alarming degree; it would not only be difficult to raise money by way of mortgage on estates, but it would soon be impossible even to sell and be paid for them. He said he was lately with an eminent Solicitor, who told him that he had clients who wanted to mortgage estates to the value of a million of money, but that if this loan to the Emperor took place, he should scarcely be able to raise any of it.

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* informed the Hon. Baronet, that his observations did not relate to the subject before the Committee. He would explain what he intended to be understood as his sentiments with regard to the government of France, and as to what sort of government he thought it safe for us to treat with, and what he trusted he had said on a former night. He did not say that it would be impossible for us to treat with France in the form of a Republic, but that, under all the existing circumstances, it was not safe for us to treat for peace with them, and that our pressure was not so great as to call for such a peace as we had reason to expect they would at present offer. He said that he thought we could not have a better form than a monarchical one to be safe in treating with; it was not impossible that a republican form might be such as to be able to give security to us for the continuance of peace, and that we might by possibility treat with such a government, but he did not think it likely.

*Mr. Fox* said it was necessary for him and the Right Hon. Gentleman to understand one another. He always understood the minister to say, that it could not be safe for this country to treat with the republican form of government of France, and that we never ought to think of it but in case of extreme necessity; but now he said he did not mean to say that no republican government should be treated with, for he said there may be a republican government which we might treat with; it was almost a pity to put such a condition in the argument, because it created confusion, for now it was to be qualified with the words "under the present circumstances;" this was doing away the effect of the King's Speech, because it depended merely on the time, and not on the form of government, as thus explained by the minister. Here *Mr. Fox* desired that

part

part of the Speech, to which this argument referred, to be read ; which being done, Mr. Fox begged an explanation.

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, it was a little difficult to state nicely and exactly all the shades of distinction, which might attend such a thing as this. The necessary nature of every opinion must depend on a comparison of circumstances ; his opinion was, that with the present government, under the present existing circumstances, there could be no certainty or security, and therefore no safety in treating ; there might be a change in part, so as to alter the case. But he had no difficulty in saying freely, there must be a great change in one country or the other, or both, before he should think it proper to negotiate or treat. The difficulty on our part must be much greater than it is, and their aspect must be much more formidable towards us, than at present, before any treaty with them ought to be thought of by us.

*Mr. Fox* said, then the question would turn entirely as to what alteration there might be in the circumstances of the two countries, and particularly in the form of the French Government. He thought he understood the Right Hon. Gentleman, and he hoped some Hon. Member, fitter for it than himself, would make a motion on the subject, for he thought they were now fairly at issue.

*Mr. Jolliffe* said, he was anxious for peace ; and, if any specific motion were made on proper grounds, he should not oppose it.

*Mr. Sheridan* rose again.—He said he had heard many things asserted in the course of the debate, which he thought open to a ready answer from the meanest understanding ; but having troubled the Committee so often, he had remained silent.

There had, however, arisen a new circumstance. The answer given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the doubts of a worthy Baronet (Sir William Milner), had caused a discussion of the utmost importance. Nothing could be of more importance than to ascertain from the mouth of the minister, an explicit declaration of the real causes and objects of the war. His Hon. Friend (Mr. Fox) had said, that he had understood him on this subject. Conscious of the superior quickness of intellect which his Hon. Friend possessed, he had no doubt but that his Hon. Friend had comprehended his meaning ; but for himself, he must plainly say, that, after constantly watching the minister on this subject, he had uniformly found him giving an apparently plain opinion ; and then, when pressed for a little explanation, clothing that opinion in such a multiplicity of  
of

of words, that, in proportion as he professed to be intelligible, he had found him utterly obscure.

The point now to be ascertained was—What was the prospect of the minister's present deliberate declarations as to the object of the war? Mr. Sheridan quoted all Mr. Pitt's different declarations and explanations on this subject, which he shewed went to establish these points:—First, That *no treaty* could be had with the *present* government of France; then, That no negotiation could ever be entertained with them, till a government of *our choice* was imposed upon them, or until we were justified in treating with them, by being wholly subdued and completely at their mercy.

In short, he would put Mr. Pitt's declarations, which had been detailed in many sentences, in a very few words—The present ministers would give peace to England whenever we should CONQUER FRANCE, or whenever France should CONQUER US!—It was a declaration of *insanity*; and, if the House of Commons or the Country supported him after this declaration, they must be as mad as the maniac that deluded them.

The resolution that a supply be granted to his Majesty, was then put and carried, and the report was ordered to be received next day.

A new writ was ordered for Petersfield, in the room of the Right Hon. Welbore Ellis, now called to the House of Peers. Adjourned.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS.

SATURDAY, Jan. 3.

Mr. Hobart brought up the report of the Committee of Supply. The resolution was read a first and second time, and agreed to *nem. con.*

The House agreed to resolve itself into a Committee of the whole House, on Monday, to consider of a supply to be granted his Majesty.

The estimates of the navy and army, and various other public accounts of the last year, were ordered to be laid before the House.

The following accounts, by his Majesty's command, were presented by Mr. Rose, *viz.*

An account of all additions which have been made to the annual charge of the public debt:

An account of the nett product of the additional duties on horses and carriages, from the 5th of July 1789; and also an account of the nett income of the tax of ten per cent. charged

upon the assessed taxes by an Act of the 31st Geo. III. for one year, from Oct. 10, 1793, to Oct. 10, 1794.

An account of the additional duties 1789, on newspapers, advertisements, cards, dice, legacies, and probates of wills, for the same time.

An account of the nett produce of the duties on British spirits, and on foreign spirits, granted in the year 1791, for the same time.

An account of the nett produce of the duties on sugar, for one year, for the same time.

An account of the nett produce of the duties on additional game certificates, for the same time.

An account of the nett produce of the duties on bills and receipts, for the same time.

An account of the nett produce of the duties on British spirits, granted anno 1794, to the 10th of October, the same year.

An account of the nett produce of the stamp duty on indentures of clerks to Attornies and Solicitors, 1794, to the 10th of October in the same year.

An account of the nett produce of the additional duties on bricks and tiles, from the 28th of March to the 10th of October 1794.

An account of the nett produce of the duty on paper, from the 28th of March to the 10th of October 1794.

An account of the nett produce of the duties on glafs, from the 17th of April to the 10th of October 1794.

An account of the nett produce of the duties on slates, stones, and marble, from the 5th of July to the 10th of October 1794.

An account of the nett produce of the duties on distilleries, and licences granted to distillers in Scotland, from the 5th of April to the 10th of October 1794, made perpetual 5th of April 1794.

The titles of all these accounts were read, and ordered to be laid on the table.

*Mr. Rose* also presented—

An account of the total produce of the customs, excise, stamps, and incidents, for one year.

An account of the total produce of the duties of customs in England and Scotland, for the four quarters, ending October 10, 1794.

An account of the total produce of the excise in England and Scotland, for the four quarters, ending at the same time.

Adjourned.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS.

MONDAY, Jan. 5.

*Lord Viscount Parker* reported at the Bar, that his Majesty had been waited upon with the Address of that House, that his Majesty would be graciously pleased to give directions to the proper officers, that the estimates, lists, and accounts therein mentioned, might be laid before the House, and that his Majesty had been graciously pleased to declare that he should give directions accordingly.

The order of the day being read, the House resolved itself into a Committee of the whole House, to consider of a supply to be granted to his Majesty, in which six millions were voted to pay off Exchequer Bills.

The report was ordered to be received to-morrow, and the House agreed to go into a Committee to consider further of a supply to be granted to his Majesty.

## SUBSIDY TO PRUSSIA.

*Mr. Jekyl* desired to be informed by the minister relative to the effect of our treaty with the King of Prussia: This appeared to him to be necessary in any view of our continental alliance, but more particularly as we were about to be called upon to enter into an important one with Austria. He then wished to know what instalments of the sum agreed to be paid by us to the King of Prussia were actually received by that Monarch, and also what troops he had employed in the purpose for which we paid him the subsidy. He assigned as the reason for putting the question then, that he understood many Gentlemen would be engaged next week in the business of the Quarter Sessions, and he trusted the candour of the minister would give him an explicit answer.

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, the last instalment was made in the month of September last.

*Mr. Jekyl* wished to know what the amount was in all of the money given to the King of Prussia?

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, he had not the least objection to the accounts on that subject being laid on the table of the House. The amount of the whole sum which had been sent to his Prussian Majesty from this country amounted to twelve hundred thousand pounds.

## PEACE WITH THE FRENCH REPUBLIC.

*Mr. Grey* said, that as Gentlemen were about to leave town for a short time, in order to attend either their private con-

cerns or their public duty in various parts of the country, he wished to defer for a while a motion which he intended to make.

The subject he meant to bring forward, he said, was of great importance; he therefore thought it was proper, at the time he gave notice of it, to state precisely what the motion was. It related to what had partly been before the House. He was one of those who thought that proposals for peace might, at this time, be made with advantage to this country, but the minister had declared himself to be of a contrary opinion. He thought he understood the Right Hon. Gentleman, at last, upon that subject: He believed him to say in effect this;—"That the form of government in France, with which this country could with the greatest safety and the best advantage treat and negotiate, was that of a monarchical form, established on something like the old form of the constitution of that country. That he could conceive, however, intermediate circumstances, in which it might be prudent for us even to treat with a republican form of government in that country; but that, under the present circumstances, we could not, consistently with the dignity of the Crown, or the safety of the country, negotiate with the present Government of France."—So far from being of this opinion, he was well persuaded that we could, consistently with the dignity of the Crown, and the safety of the Public, enter at this time into that negotiation, and he wished for the discussion of that subject; and, therefore, he gave notice, that on the 20th of this month he should move, "That it is the opinion of this House, that the existence of the present Government of France ought not to be considered as precluding at this time a negotiation between us." These were the words of the motion, as he intended to make it; if there was any Member in the House who thought that the same idea might be better expressed, he should be glad to hear what was to be said upon that point; but, if nothing relevant of that sort was then said, he should bring his motion forward as it stood.

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* gave the Hon. Gentleman credit for having stated his proposition in a fair, open, and manly way, but said, he should not attempt to discuss the subject, because another season would arrive for that purpose;—he desired it to be understood, however, that he wished the matter to be discussed fully, fairly, and freely, whether from the internal situation of France it would be wise, discreet, or prudent, on the part of this country, to enter into any negotiation at this time.

CITY

## CITY MILITIA BILL.

*Mr. Sheridan* called the attention of the House, for a moment, to the City Militia Bill. He observed that the Bill had been hurried through the House with unexampled and independent precipitancy, and when he opposed it as an infringement of the chartered rights of the citizens of London, he was told he was interfering in a matter for which the citizens of London would not be obliged to him; that they had considered the principle of the Bill, and approved of it. The fact, however, was directly the reverse: The citizens had not then an opportunity of understanding the Bill completely, and when they did understand it, they disapproved of it highly. It was not his view to catch at temporary popularity, by affecting to feel for the rights of persons for whom he had no real concern; the truth was, that he considered the Bill in question to be a gross violation of the rights of a very respectable body of men, whom it was the common duty of all the Members of that House to esteem and respect. To shew, however, that he had no desire of thrusting himself forward in this business, he would decline it altogether, if he should find that the Members for the city were disposed to do their duty to their constituents upon the subject. What he wished to know at this moment was, whether it was the intention of those Hon. Gentlemen, representatives of the city, to bring forward a motion for the repeal of the City Militia Bill, or to propose some regulation of it? He desired an answer to that question.

*Mr. Alderman Curtis* said, some active endeavours had been made by a particular party in the city, not very friendly to the measures of the present Administration, to render that Bill odious. The citizens, however, had, with their usual good sense, been able to withstand the most palatable poison, and he doubted not but the Bill would prove a blessing to them. A committee had been appointed in the city to examine into this subject, but they had not yet made their report, and therefore he could not give all the information he could wish. But with regard to the principle of the Bill, he would venture to say it was approved of by a large majority of the citizens of London. This he collected from the meetings which had taken place upon the subject.

*Mr. Alderman Anderson* said, that many attempts had been made to impose on the understandings of the citizens of London upon this subject, but they would not swallow the poison, however palatable the dose was made; the majority of the citizens were decidedly in favour of the Bill. He took notice that *Mr. Sheridan* had said, the Members for London were not present



present on Friday; Mr. Anderson said, he was in the House at a quarter of an hour after four o'clock, and he begged leave to say, that considering his other important concerns, he attended the House, he believed, as frequently as any Member, and he trusted that none of these reflections would be thrown out again. He understood the Hon. Gentleman had said, in the hearing of some persons, that he (Mr. Alderman Anderson) had conversed with, that he should have some observations to make that day, if the Members for the city attended their duty.

Mr. Sheridan left it to the worthy Alderman to take credit for his attendance in that House; he, for one, did not think it was an indifferent, or a minor part of a Member's duty to attend the House. With regard to his having promised to make some observations upon this subject that day, in the hearing of any body in that House, he certainly did not make that promise in the hearing of any body, for he did not make it at all. With regard to the popularity of the Bill, the Gentlemen who had asserted that, would do well to revise that opinion; he thought they would soon have reason to change it; if he could judge of what he heard so frequently, and particularly from the proceedings of the numerous meeting of the ward of Farringdon Without, the Bill had aroused the indignation of the citizens of London, but by no means met their favourable opinion. He should say nothing further at present upon the subject.

Mr. Alderman Le Mesurier said, that in spite of the efforts that had been made to provoke a different sentiment, the Bill in question was no sooner properly understood, than it became popular in the city; that many of the wards had expressed as much in their meeting, but that perhaps the Hon. Gentleman, who insisted on the contrary, did not know this, for the citizens of London were not in the habit of publishing their proceedings in republican newspapers.

#### CALL OF THE HOUSE.

Mr. Fox said he had a motion to make, which was not unusual on similar occasions, if a similar occasion to the present could be recollected in the history of this country. In a short time the minister was to call for a loan, unexampled in point of magnitude, as well as under peculiar circumstances, a large part of which was intended to be applied to the assistance of a foreign Prince. On the day previous to the discussion of that subject, an Hon. Friend of his (Mr. Grey) was to bring forward a very important motion. Under the present alarming aspect of our affairs, they could not proceed with too much solemnity,

solemnity ; and therefore he should move that the House be called over on the 20th of this month.

The question was put and carried, to which was added the usual order in such cases—that such Members as do not answer to the call be taken into the custody of the Serjeant at Arms.

*Mr. Jekyl* reminded the minister, that he had not given him an answer to the latter part of his question, relative to our subsidy to the King of Prussia ; he should therefore be obliged to make a motion, which he did to the following effect :—“That there be laid before the House an account of the money issued and received by the King of Prussia, and at what time the instalments were made, in consequence of a treaty entered into between him and his Majesty, in the month of April 1794 ; together with an account of the number of troops which have been employed in concert with his Majesty's troops, in pursuance of the said treaty.”

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, he did not mean to object to the account of the instalments ; the amount of the whole he had stated already to be twelve hundred thousand pounds ; but as to the number of troops employed by the King of Prussia, in concert with his Majesty's troops, it was such as he could not assent to, because Government had received no official returns of their number.

*Mr. Fox* said, this appeared to him to be very strange—When we entered into a treaty with a foreign Prince, should we not know whether he had performed the whole or any part of what he undertook to perform ? For what purpose, he wished to know, were Commissioners or Commissaries appointed on our part, but to transmit to us an official account of our troops, and to deliver to that Prince the directions of our Government upon that subject ? Nothing was to be communicated to the people of this country, but the sum of money which had been taken out of their pockets. We should not know whether the King of Prussia stopped his services in September, or continued them so long ; or whether he did any thing more than receive our money. He could not conceive it possible that ministers should not know what the King of Prussia did ; he could not believe they had been so grossly negligent of their duty as not to inform themselves of something upon the subject, besides the mere amount of the sums they paid to a foreign Prince for his assistance, and the dates of the instalments. Sure he was the House of Commons would grossly neglect their duty if they approved of such conduct.

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, there was a wide difference between having no account at all, and having that detailed official

official account of the precise number of troops employed upon that service. He was perfectly ready to discuss the whole question of that treaty, if any Gentleman chose to bring the whole matter forward before the House, and he was ready to take his full share of the responsibility which could attach to him as one of his Majesty's servants in advising the concluding of that treaty; he would go further, and declare from the general knowledge which he had of all the circumstances, it was such as he would advise again in a similar situation, and therefore he moved by way of Amendment to this motion, that the words, "together with an account of the number of troops which have been employed in concert with his Majesty's troops, in pursuance of the said treaty," be left out.

Mr. Fox said, that the minister's speech was to him the most alarming he ever heard. There was no information whatever in it but the asking for information was treated with contempt. He then compared the treaty in question with other treaties, with that made with the Landgrave of Hesse, and that with the King of Sardinia, and maintained that as it appeared from the Chancellor of the Exchequer's statement, the treaty with the King of Prussia was more disadvantageous to us than either of the others, by the proportion of from 20 to 30 to 1;—really, in such a situation, our condition was an alarming one; the people of this country had a right to know whether they gave for their money what they agreed for; and such satisfactory information, he believed, would soon be insisted upon, notwithstanding all the attempts at keeping up a system of delusion, and plunging them deeper and deeper into an abyss of ruin. The minister professed his readiness to discuss the whole of the subject whenever it was brought forward. What was this? Was it not an insulting mockery of the House? What discussion could ever possibly take place if the House were never to have any information upon the subject?—This treaty was not pretended to be similar to that with the King of Sardinia—a subsidy to a foreign Prince for engaging to defend his own dominions; on the contrary, it was vauntingly stated to the House, at the time it was proposed, to be a treaty with a foreign Prince fond of military glory, who undertook to bring a large body of troops into the British service, to be under the command, it was true, of a Prussian General, but we were to have our Commissary or Commissioner, and he believed Lord Cornwallis was appointed to that office; was it therefore probable we could have no account of these forces? It was the especial duty of the Commissary or Commissioners, officially to report from time to time the rate and number of the Prussian troops in our service, otherwise 50,000 troops might be paid for

for month after month, year after year, without the real benefit of adequate assistance. The minister was pleased to say he had general information upon that subject; would he condescend to convey to the House a little of that general information? if he did, it would then be a question for the House to consider what ought to be their conduct upon such a subject; and in judging of that they ought to reflect that they were the guardians of the public purse, and ought not, by countenancing such an amendment, to suffer the public treasure to be thus wantonly wasted.

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* declared his astonishment at the comparison which was made by the Right Hon. Gentleman of twenty or thirty to one, it being so extravagantly out of all bounds of sober calculation. He compared the treaty with the King of Prussia to others in former wars, in which he maintained that the existing treaty was more to our advantage than any of the preceding treaties: And he repeated, that, from his general knowledge of the service of his Prussian Majesty in the common cause, in consequence of the last treaty, however subject it might be to some ground of question, such essential assistance had been afforded to us and to the rest of Europe, as would induce him, under similar circumstances, to give to his Majesty precisely the same advice as he had given on that occasion.

*Mr. Fox* admitted that the calculation he had hastily made, was too high when he stated the existing treaty to be more to our disadvantage than others, in the proportion of twenty to one; but it was not less after all than fifteen to one. To prove this *Mr. Fox* entered into an arithmetical deduction of the subject in support of his assertion, observing, that there were 150,000 men allowed for 670,000*l.* and in the treaty with the King of Sardinia, 50,000 men were subsidized for 200,000*l.* so that the three-fifths of the present treaty were as 120,000 men, and bore the exact proportion of one to fifteen. That, said *Mr. Fox*, is the calculation, and I beg pardon for my former incorrectness. He recapitulated what he had before said, and observed, that it was then too late to recall the 1,200,000*l.* and as it appeared necessary to have some excuse, the success of these foreign mercenaries was talked of, when the whole series of the campaign consisted of disaster and disgrace. *Mr. Fox* thought it particularly hard for the country that the goods should not be remitted when the money was paid. After comparing the last Prussian treaty with that made with the late King, and that entered into with the King of Sardinia, and having made many additional observations, he concluded with saying, that this business, in the present stage of it, was so extraordinary and alarming, that he should think he did

not do his duty if he did not take the sense of the House upon the subject.

*Mr. Windham* remarked, that the Right Hon. Gentleman had deemed it necessary to cke out his argument with a mis-statement. When his Right Hon. Friend mentioned the success derived from the assistance of these subsidiaries, he was perfectly consistent, although their endeavours had been attended with disaster; for, such was the connexion the one had with the other, that when they acted up to success, they co-operated to success, and if they failed unitedly, the failure would have been much greater without such assistance.

The failure was of a different sort from that of which the complaint was made. If the failure proceeded from a deficiency of number, according to the stipulation, then blame was to be attached; but if it proceeded from situation and from circumstance, or any other remote cause, the treaty was successful as far as their assistance tended; and though much more might have been hoped for, there was nothing further to be required. There was clearly a misrepresentation in stating that his Right Hon. Friend had asserted that he had no information at all—he had merely stated he had nothing but general information, which was not sufficient to lay before the House. The stoppage of payment in September, certainly tended to shew that we had the control, contended for by Administration, over the Prussian forces.

*Mr. Fox*, in explanation, said, he was surprised to hear persons talk of the division of our success on the continent, when the sum of it did not appear capable of division. Indeed he did not think that any person, except a gentleman of such acute reasoning as his Right Hon. Friend, could have made a division on the disasters of the war.

*Mr. Thompson* said a few words, not distinctly heard.

*Mr. Jekyll* wished the Chancellor of the Exchequer to give the House some of the general information, from which he formed his opinion of the essential assistance which the King of Prussia had afforded to the common cause, as an equivalent for the 1,200,000*l.* which he had received of this country; for the Public were ignorant, he feared, of that essential assistance.

On the question being put, the House divided—

<i>For the motion</i>	23
<i>Against it</i>	110

#### REPEAL OF THE HABEAS CORPUS SUSPENSION ACT.

*Mr. Sheridan* rose pursuant to his notice of last Tuesday to bring forward a motion for the repeal of the Act of the last session, suspending the operation of the *Habeas Corpus Act* in particular respects. He said, that in addressing the House upon

upon a subject of the most important consideration, he by no means wished to mix his own opinions with what he should lay before them, but simply to bring forward the real state of facts.

He was perfectly well aware, that in the present calamitous situation of the country, it might have been expected that he should direct their attention to the war rather than to any other topic, and that to bring forward another subject, might appear to have a tendency to divert their attention from that which was the principal object of public anxiety. He was also aware, that there was something risked by the motion which he was about to submit to the House, as it probably would not meet with the concurrence of all those who, on the first night of the session, had expressed their disapprobation of the war, and that while an appearance of strength was gathering to the party in opposition to the present war, the effect might be to produce a degree of public discouragement, and to diminish the hopes that were entertained of putting a speedy end to the unhappy contest in which the country was engaged—an effect anxiously to be avoided. There were however some questions of essential and deep importance, which no consideration on the ground of expedience should induce him to forego. Such was the question which he should that night bring forward. The original opposers of the war, who had encountered so much unpopularity at its outset, would firmly stand on the same ground in supporting the principles which they had uniformly avowed; while those who had joined them in the opposition to the war would consider how far it was incumbent upon them to support the same principles. The present was undoubtedly the very first question which those who wished for peace were bound to support.—The primary consideration which had been held out by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with respect to the necessity of the war, was the internal situation of the country. A view of that situation was certainly in every respect most important. Whether we looked to the continuance of the war or to the event of peace, it was of consequence to ascertain whether the subjects of this country were actuated by a loyal attachment to the King, and an unshaken zeal for the constitution, or were under the influence of opposite sentiments. The Right Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Pitt) had asked, if we should make peace, what would be the consequence of the inundation of French principles in this country? He, for one, did not dread the consequence. But the Right Hon. Gentleman had rightly taken his ground, if he supposed the people of England actuated by seditious and treasonable sentiments, and ready on the first

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opportunity to sacrifice all the blessings which they enjoyed from the admirable form of their constitution, and to destroy themselves. This was the point at issue between them, the point on which he was prepared to meet him. The question was not, whether the *Habeas Corpus* Act should remain suspended till February, though a Right Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Dundas) had thought proper to declare, by anticipation, that in the present situation of things he should be of opinion that the suspension ought to be renewed. If he thought that there remained no ground for suspending it, no consideration of the shortness of time would induce him to withdraw his motion. He would say, with the father of the Right Hon. Gentleman (the Earl of Chatham), who, when he was asked whether he would submit to a tyranny of forty days, answered, No; he would not consent that the people of England should be fettered and shackled even for an hour. The question now was, Whether the *Habeas Corpus* Act should remain suspended for ever? Another consideration connected with his motion, was, Whether the reverence and respect for the decisions of juries, so intimately interwoven with the best principles of the British constitution, and hitherto so sacredly observed, should or should not be eradicated from the minds of the people of England? In conducting the present discussion, he should argue from circumstances as they really existed. He would appeal to the Gentlemen on the other side, with respect to the situation in which this country was now placed; and he would ask them, Whether they would not accept of the compromise, that the sentiments, numbers, and force of the societies, who had been held up as dangerous to the constitution, should remain exactly as they were at present? But there was no situation in which those Gentlemen were not provided with an answer. If it was urged that the designs of those societies had been checked, they would ask, Whether they ought to withdraw the security at the moment they had succeeded in repelling the danger? If the influence of the societies was said to be increased, they would contend that the force, which it had been thought necessary to oppose to an inferior danger, became still more indispensable when the danger was increased. If they were called upon in a time of war, they would allege, that was not the proper time to judge of the degree of power to be granted to the executive government; if during the interval of peace, they would enlarge upon the necessity of guarding against the consequences of an intercourse with the daring republicans of France. There was no situation in which they would not be provided with some argument for suspending this chief bulwark of the rights and liberties of Englishmen. The suspension

sion would be justified, not merely as a guard against the crime of treason, but, according to the new phrase, any disposition to *moral guilt* which might be productive of dangers. On such pretences would the suspension be justified, and the Act itself never again be restored. He would remind Gentlemen of the grounds on which the suspension had been voted: The preamble of the Act stated, that—"Whereas a traitorous and treasonable conspiracy," &c.

He would proceed to facts. Did this traitorous detestable conspiracy exist, if indeed it had ever existed at all? It would be necessary to prove not only that it once existed, but that the same danger still continued. Were they prepared to go the length of these assertions? He would not shrink from what he had said on a former occasion, that he considered ministers as the sole fabricators of these plots. What he had then declared from strong surmise and deep suspicion, he was now enabled to repeat from the evidence of facts. He had at his back the verdicts of repeated juries, who had negatived the existence of any such plot. The opinion of juries had however been lately treated in such a manner, that he was almost afraid to quote their authority: But he would remind a Learned Gentleman (Sir John Mitford), that for language much less unconstitutional than he had employed, with respect to the verdicts of these juries, a Learned Serjeant had formerly been committed to prison by the House of Commons. That Learned Gentleman had told them, that the acquittal of a jury did not declare the man innocent, it only exempted him from being tried again upon the same charge. He had always understood, that it was a maxim of the law of England, that every man was presumed to be innocent, till he was found guilty. But so far from this being the case, he was now told, that not even the acquittal of a jury established his innocence, or restored him to his former place in society. Great stress had been laid upon the decision of a grand jury. He did not rest much upon that, more especially as he understood that some degree of management had been employed in forming that grand jury. Letters were sent round; one of which he then held in his hand, dispensing with the attendance of some who might otherwise have sat on that grand jury, and so far as that went, had the effect of packing them. But he could not certainly regard the authority of any grand jury as of much weight, if after the prisoner was put upon his trial, by their finding a bill against him, he was still, by the liberal spirit of the law of England, to be considered innocent till he was found guilty by a verdict of his peers. A Right Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Windham) had gone even farther than the Learned Character



rafter to whom he had alluded; he had thrown down the gauntlet to his Right Hon. Friend (Mr. Fox).—How far it was prudent or proper in that Gentleman so to do, he would not take upon him to determine, especially when he recollected that on a former occasion he had declared that he would not give up the title of his Friend till his Right Hon. Friend had first given him a hint for that purpose. He had not waited for the hint; he had now renounced the title. Nor was such a hint to be expected from his Right Hon. Friend by those who knew with what strength of attachment he clung to all of whom he had been accustomed to think favourably, and how unwilling he was to give up any who had once formed claims upon his friendship. Now, however, that the Right Hon. Gentleman had voluntarily disclaimed the connexion, he had no hesitation to declare that he should henceforth meet him on the ground of fair hostility. That Hon. Gentleman, next to another person, had been the principal instrument of bringing the country into the calamitous situation in which it was now placed. He trusted that he had abilities to extricate it from the difficulties of that situation. At any rate he knew that he had boldness to wait the responsibility which would ultimately attach to all the authors of the present war. Except there was something in the support of the war that corrupted and degraded the human heart, he should have thought that the Hon. Gentleman would have been the last of all men to apply to persons acquitted by juries of their country, the opprobrious epithet of *Acquitted Felons*. There might have been some ground for thinking that those persons had owed their escape to a flaw in the indictment, or to a deficiency of technical forms; it might then have been urged that they were not entitled by the verdict of a jury to a regeneration of character, and were still to be considered in the light in which the Hon. Gentleman had placed them, as men branded with guilt and driven from society. He would not say that every man acquitted was therefore innocent: There could be no rule of that sort without an exception; a criminal might owe his acquittal to a flaw in the indictment or a failure of the evidence. It had been stated the other night that a person might be charged with murder who had only been guilty of house-breaking, and because he was not found guilty upon the first charge, was he therefore to be considered as a pure and honourable character? But did the men who had lately been acquitted stand in that situation? If there was any case in which the verdict of a jury went completely to establish the innocence of the party accused, it ought to be with respect to the charge of high treason. That charge, it was to be recollected,

lected, came with the highest authority, and with a degree of weight and influence which it was difficult for any individual to resist. It was to be recollected too, that with respect to the crime of high treason the country itself was both party and judge, since he who levies war against the King, at the same time conspires against the peace of the country. With respect to the charge of levying war, it was possible that the party accused might escape from the incompetency of the evidence; but with respect to the charge of compassing and imagining the King's death, the intention itself constituted the crime; and if the jury had in their own minds a conviction of the criminal intention, and there was sufficient proof of the overt-act, they were bound to find their verdict Guilty. He would now put it, whether, in the course of the late trials, any thing that could have been brought forward against the prisoners was omitted from any want of time or attention? He had heard indeed a Learned Gentleman (the Solicitor General) say, that the jury, if they had known all that he did, would have found their verdict differently. That Learned Gentleman he conceived must have been asleep at the time, otherwise the obvious inference was, that he had neglected to state to the jury all that he knew, and had thereby shewn himself disqualified for the place which he held, a confession which he surely would not wish to make to the Gentlemen along with whom he sat, far less to those on the other side the House. He would suppose that the declaration, to which he had alluded, had been made in the haste of debate, inadvertently and without due consideration. The Learned Gentleman could not mean that any thing further had since come to his knowledge, since he had himself admitted that the effect of those acquittals went to prevent the parties from being again tried on the same charge. No pains had surely been spared to bring those persons to a conviction if they had been really guilty. A Report of that House was brought forward, containing almost every thing that was afterwards adduced in evidence, and that was followed by the decision of the grand jury. Neither could it be contended, that there was any want of time; some of the persons tried, were taken up in May; the six months previous to their trial were employed in collecting and arranging evidence; a task in which many respectable persons, urged by a sense of what they conceived to be their duty to their country, were induced to take an active part. Neither was there any deficiency of legal ability; twelve gentlemen of the greatest professional eminence, whose talents were adequate to any cause, were retained on the side of the Crown, at an expence of upwards of 8000*l.*, independently of the bill of the

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the Solicitor to the Treasury. [Mr. Sheridan here read the list of the names of the Counsel for the prosecution.] The Attorney General had, he said, assured him that he exerted his abilities gratuitously, an example which he trusted would be imitated, and for which he gave him honour, though he could not approve of his doctrines of high-treason, doctrines which if they were once to be admitted, no man could, in his opinion, be safe; nor yet of the detestable evidence of spies, so much resorted to in the conduct of the prosecution. Such an array could only indeed have been encountered by the abilities and eloquence of his Hon. Friend, who by his conduct on that occasion acquired the highest honour, but to whom all professional honour was become superfluous, and therefore he might deem it fortunate that he was associated with Mr. Gibbs, who deservedly came in for a share of credit in the transaction. But perhaps the Gentlemen engaged in the prosecution would contend that they did not bring a sufficient number of witnesses, that they were willing to spare the trouble of persons engaged in different occupations, and residing in distant parts of the country. "How far this is the case," said Mr. Sheridan, "will appear from a paper which I shall now read, the list of the witnesses summoned in the case of Mr. Joyce, who was never tried." Of this list Mr. Sheridan read an abstract; it consisted of twenty-three persons belonging to the office of the Secretary of State, forty-four gaolers and sheriffs' officers, twenty-two booksellers and printers, seventeen Scotchmen, who never saw the prisoner, besides a number of lawyers and lawyers' clerks, excisemen, and officers under Government, amounting, in all, to *two hundred and seven* witnesses. There was one circumstance to be noticed: Many of those who were brought forward to give evidence were kept in prison for a considerable time, till they were wanted for that purpose;—there they were cooped up, half witnesses and half principals, till the day of trial; and yet, to the men who had been placed in this situation, many of whom had lost their business, and been hurt in their character, not the smallest compensation had been given; he would not say, because they had failed in giving an evidence which might have been favourable to the views of the prosecution; some of them had been sent back to Sheffield with three pounds to defray their expences.

With regard to the manner in which the proceedings had been conducted, at least no labour had been spared. The first speech on the trials took up no less a space than nine hours. Had he been in the situation of a jurymen, the very circumstance of an Attorney General taking up nine hours to tell him of an overt act of high treason, would have been a reason  
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reason why he should have given it as his opinion, that he could not believe it, and that it could not possibly be true; because it was not probable that so elaborate an argument and so much time should be necessary to explain the fact constituting an overt-act of treason, which to call for a verdict from a jury, ought to be level to the comprehension of men of the plainest understandings. The whole procedure on the prosecution, was a piece of delicate clock-work, a sort of filligree or network, not too slight to hold a robust traitor, and yet so contrived in the construction of its meshes, as to let all the lesser cases of libel and sedition escape. The very intricacy and labour of the proceedings was, to his mind, the most satisfactory testimony that the case could not be supported on the grounds of substantial evidence and constitutional principles. If he was asked, Did there not appear from these trials instances of sedition? he had no hesitation to say, that they exhibited instances of many gross and scandalous libels. He was ready to admit that there were in the societies mischievous men intent on mischievous purposes.—There were others actuated by enthusiasm, whom he could not consider in the same light, because it was that sort of enthusiasm which had actuated men of the purest minds in any period. As to the phrases of Convention, Citizen, &c. in which they had affected an imitation and approbation of the proceedings of the French, the worst that could be said of them was, that they were foolish and contemptibly ridiculous. He had attended the trials, not merely upon the coercion of the *subpœna*, which summoned him as a witness, but from a principle of duty.—He was of opinion that every man, who loved the constitution, and who thought that it was endangered by false alarms, would feel it incumbent, on such an occasion, to attend trials which he considered as originating from ministerial artifice; and to watch the conduct of the Crown Lawyers, and of the Judges, in order to avert those calamities from the country, in which, at former times, it had been involved, and to prevent that most dreadful of all wars—a war of plots and conspiracies; wars in which the purest blood had been shed by the most destructive of all weapons, the perjured tongues of spies and informers. That there was no real danger, appeared from the declaration of the Chief Justice Eyre, who, in summing up on one of the trials, stated, that it was an ostentatious and boasting conspiracy, and that it was much in favour of the accused, that they had neither men, money, nor zeal to effect the purposes with which they were charged. On the first trial one pike was produced; that was afterwards withdrawn from mere shame. A formidable instrument was talked of to be

employed against the cavalry ; it appeared upon evidence to be a tee-totum in a window at Sheffield. There was a camp in a back garret, an arsenal provided with nine muskets, and an exchequer containing nine pounds and one bad shilling ; all to be directed against the whole armed force and established government of Great Britain. Mr. Sheridan said, that he, in the first instance, had shewn the most obstinate incredulity with respect to all the rumours of a plot. He endeavoured to recollect whether the present ministry had, in any former instance, availed themselves of a similar artifice. He recollected that in the year 1783, at the period when the Coalition took place, they represented those who were engaged in that measure as setting up a fourth party in the State, as wishing to supersede the authority of the King, and to destroy the constitution, and had actually persuaded many well-meaning people at the time to be of that opinion.—[A cry of *Hear ! hear !*] He then said, he recollected too, that the very men who had set up the coalition were now in the Cabinet, and that the charge brought against them must have been false, and an instance of successful deception. He was more confirmed in his persuasion of the trick, when he looked to the conduct of the Right Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Pitt), who had adopted the policy of keeping open the door of Parliamentary Reform, and leaving it a little *a-jar* before him, that he might get himself out by it, and whose system it had uniformly been on that question, to do just as much as might nourish hope and yet discourage effort. He recollected that the Society of the Friends of the People had been instituted by one whom he could name only to honour (Mr. Grey), that it originally consisted of a hundred persons, of whose characters it would not become him to speak, since he himself had the honour to be of the number. That Society had, at its first formation, been represented as more pernicious than any of the others ; it had been held out, both in that and in the other House, as a combination of men, a political club, the existence of which was incompatible with the safety of the constitution. Their first institution had been followed by a proclamation, in order to secure the country from the infection of their principles. In what light had that Society been held on the late trials ? That very Society had been represented as the saviours of the country, as the standards of political orthodoxy ; and it had been represented as the blackest aggravation of the guilt of the other societies, that they had not suffered themselves to be guided by them, that they had not implicitly adopted their principles, or concurred in their proceedings. In fact, it appeared as if the indictment had been drawn not so much for the purpose of charging the

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accused with treason against the Sovereign, as to charge the Constitutional and London Corresponding Society with want of allegiance to the majesty of the Society held at the Freemasons' Tavern. This he could not help regarding as the second instance of successful deception. The proclamation afterwards issued (the 30th of November 1792), previous to the calling out of the militia on the assembling of Parliament, put into the mouth of his Majesty an expression that was not true, namely, that there existed conspiracies and insurrections in the country. It might, indeed, have been urged, that at that time there was great appearance of danger, and that it was better to prevent the meditated mischief, than to wait for its arrival. In such a case, ministers would have done better to have taken the responsibility upon themselves, and applied to Parliament for a Bill of Indemnity. He had, on a former occasion, taken notice of all the arts which were at that time employed to propagate alarm; of the Duke of Richmond throwing himself into the Tower in the middle of the night; of the mail coaches being retarded, and carrying with them the most dismal reports of the state of the metropolis, so that every person who arrived in a postchaise, expected to find all London in a flame. He had then surmised that the whole of this was merely the effect of political artifice; he now found his suspicion confirmed by facts. During the course of the trials, he had heard the evidence of the spies of Government, no part of which went to sanction the alarm which had been so industriously propagated. It followed, therefore, either that ministers were deceived by their own spies, and had thereby shewed themselves unfit for the situation which they held, or that they had acted upon an alarm, which they did not feel, to answer the infamous purposes of their own ambition, and to delude the people into a wicked and a ruinous war. At the time every body admitted that the measures of ministry were extraordinary; but something they said must come out. Papers notoriously in the pay of ministers, even took upon them to mention the particulars of the plot, to speak of the New River being poisoned, to assert other strange matters perpetrated by the conspirators, and even to name the persons concerned. Mr. Sheridan said, he had then moved for a Committee of the House to inquire into the subject; his motion was negatived, because ministers knew that no such plot had ever existed; and therefore said, that circumstances were not yet ripe for inquiry. If Government wanted a plot, plots, like other commodities, would be brought to the market. Had his motion been adopted when it was first proposed, it

would have refuted the libel on the character of the people of England. The Right Hon. Gentleman, in a more advanced stage of the business, had come forward with a motion for a Secret Committee of that House. It did not become him to say, that the Members who composed that Committee were not highly respectable: They were chosen by ballot; and therefore, no doubt, perfectly independent. But it was well known that every such election by ballot was determined by previous agreement; he had himself previously read the names of 13 or 14 Members who were to be in that Committee, and he must say, that it was a circumstance of suspicion that they resorted to this mode of choosing a Secret Committee, rather than by naming the Members over the table, as had been done on another important occasion. A Report was presented to that Committee, cut and dry, and by some of them, he would venture to say, adopted without much examination. In speaking of the Gentlemen who composed that Committee, he felt some degree of delicacy; they were not then all present; they were so much alarmed, that they did not consider that House as a place of sufficient security, and had taken refuge in the Upper House. A coronet, the reward of their seasonable apprehension, would, they thought, be most likely to secure the head of the owner from future danger. While the Committee were sitting upon this Report, which had been in preparation for five or six months, two notes were sent, one to his Right Hon. Friend, and another to him, informing them that something important was to take place in the House of Commons. This was all the intimation which had been thought necessary to precede a suspension of the chief bulwark of the rights and liberties of Englishmen. Upon hearing only a moiety of the Report, the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act was proposed. Seventeen divisions had, on that occasion, taken place on his side of the House; and he should ever regard the share which he had taken in that measure as the most meritorious part of his Parliamentary conduct. In the House of Lords, the business was not conducted so hastily: Their Lordships were presented with pikes, with drawings, with male and female screws; their noble natures were not so easily to be roused; it was necessary that they should be presented with some ocular demonstration of the danger.

“Segnius irritant animas dimissa per aurem,  
Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus.”

He was almost ashamed to say, that the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act was not a matter of slight or trivial consideration.

deration. Mr. Sheridan here quoted the opinion of Sir Edward Coke on the importance of the *Habeas Corpus*.

"If any man (said that great Lawyer) can be imprisoned at the will of the minister, then we are no longer any thing more than bondsmen. There remains no distinction between the freeman and the slave, the living and the dead."

He quoted likewise the passage of Blackstone's Commentary, in the following extract from his chapter on the Rights of Persons, sect. 2.

"Of great importance to the public is the preservation of this personal liberty; for if once it were left in the power of any, the highest magistrate, to imprison arbitrarily whomever he or his officers thought proper (as in France it is daily practised by the Crown), there would soon be an end of all other rights and immunities. Some have thought that unjust attacks, even upon life or property, at the arbitrary will of the magistrate, are less dangerous to the commonwealth, than such as are made upon the personal liberty of the subject. To bereave a man of life, or by violence to confiscate his estate, without accusation or trial, would be so gross and notorious an act of despotism, as must at once convey the alarm of tyranny throughout the whole kingdom: But confinement of the person, by secretly hurrying him to gaol, where his sufferings are unknown or forgotten, is a less public, a less striking, and therefore a more dangerous engine of arbitrary government. And yet, sometimes, when the state is in real danger, even this may be a necessary measure. But the happiness of our constitution is, that it is not left to the executive power to determine when the danger of the state is so great, as to render this measure expedient; for it is the Parliament only, or Legislative Power, that, whenever it sees proper, can authorise the Crown, by suspending the *Habeas Corpus* Act for a short and limited time, to imprison suspected persons, without giving any reason for so doing; as the Senate of Rome was wont to have recourse to a dictator, a magistrate of absolute authority, when they judged the Republic in any imminent danger. The decree of the Senate, which usually preceded the nomination of this magistrate, *dent operam consules, ne quid respublica detrimenti capiat*, was called the *senatus consultum ultimum necessitatis*. In like manner this experiment ought only to be tried in cases of extreme emergency; and in these the nation parts with its liberty for a while, in order to preserve it for ever."



If that position be true, if a suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* can be compared to nothing but a measure which suspends the whole of the constitution, it ought surely, Mr. Sheridan said, to take place only in cases of the most urgent and absolute necessity. He would ask whether the present was a case of such extreme emergency. If any man believed that the people of this country were infected with treasonable principles, and disposed to overturn the Government, he might then be justified in holding such an opinion; but if any man believed that the characteristic feature of the English nation was a sober, settled, and steady attachment to the constitution, it was incumbent on him to call for an immediate repeal of the act suspending the *Habeas Corpus*. Such was the opinion, which had been confirmed by repeated verdicts of a jury; verdicts which went completely to do away the idea of any conspiracy having ever existed in the country. He, for one, would not wait till new management had excited new alarms, till ministers should exercise their ingenuity in the fabrication of new plots, or should have time to propagate fresh grounds of apprehension, as the basis and justification of fresh violations of the liberty of the subject; he would call upon them immediately to restore to the people those rights, without which they could neither respect themselves, nor the government under which they lived. "I feel myself," said Mr. Sheridan, "as if contending for a melancholy truth with ministers, when I assure them that such is the state of the country, and such is the loyalty of the people, that they are firmly attached to the constitution, and disposed quietly to enjoy its blessings, without any idea of either attempting the person of his Majesty, or cutting the throats of one another. I shall hear then not of a plot, but of the existence of a propensity to moral guilt, as justifying a continuance of the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus*. I will not say that there have been no instances of sedition; but I will affirm even that the evidence of these appears in so questionable a shape as ought to excite your suspicion. It is supported by a system of spies and informers, a system which has been carried to a greater extent under the present Administration, than in any former period of the history of the country. I will not say that there is no government in Europe which does not stand in need of the assistance of spies; but I will affirm, that the government which avails itself of such support does not exist for the happiness of the people. It is a system which is calculated to engender suspicion, and to beget hostility; it not only destroys all confidence between man and man, but between the governors and the governed; where it does not find

find sedition, it creates it.—It resembles in its operations the conduct of the father of all spies and informers, the Devil, who introduced himself into Paradise not only to inform his own Pandemonium of the state of that region, but to deceive and betray the inhabitants. The spy, in order to avoid suspicion, is obliged to assume an appearance of zeal and activity; he is the first to disseminate the doctrines of sedition, or to countenance the designs of violence; he deludes the weak by the speciousness of his arguments, and inflames the turbulent by the fury of his zeal. It must have made a man's heart burn, to hear the sort of evidence brought forward by these spies on the late trials. A wretch of the name of Lynam said, that in his capacity of delegate to one of the societies, he had incurred suspicion, had been tried by the other delegates, and honourably acquitted. The counsel for the prosecution could hear such a declaration with unblushing countenances. By what means had he been acquitted, but by pretences of superior zeal, and more furious exertion? I wish the Right Hon. Gentleman who called the persons who had been tried, *acquitted felons*, had been present when such witnesses were examined against them; I wish he had been present when the Chief Baron (Macdonald) addressed Mr. Thellwall, not as an *acquitted felon*, but as having obtained a verdict, which was honourable to his character, and exhorted him to employ his talents for purposes useful to his country. The manner in which that address was made, was fit and becoming the character of the Judge by whom it was delivered; of whatever indiscretion the persons who had been tried had been guilty, it will not be disputed by those who have attended to their case, that they have feeling hearts, that they are alive to every sense of indignity, and that they must have been deeply wounded by the opprobrious epithet applied to them by the Hon. Gentleman. I trust this is sufficient to induce him to make the only reparation now in his power, by the speediest recantation of his hasty and ill-judged expression. There was another witness of the name of Taylor, not an acquitted, but a convicted felon, who had been tried for a crime, into the moral demerit of which I will not enter, but which had been attended with the aggravation of perjury, but sentenced only to a slight punishment, on account, as was alleged, of some favourable circumstances in his case, though, upon my word I could find none, except that he had contributed to hang his brother spy; yet this man was thought a proper character to be brought forward as an evidence into a Court of Justice, and allowed to hunt after the blood of Englishmen. If ministry had been duped and deluded by their spies,

spies, ought they not to admit the deception that had been played upon them? But (said Mr. Sheridan) I can suppose the case of a haughty and stiff-necked minister, who had never mixed in a popular assembly, who had therefore no common feeling with the mass of the people, no knowledge of the mode in which their intercourse is conducted, who was not a month in the ranks in this House before he was raised to the first situation, and though on a footing of equality with any other Member, elevated with the idea of fancied superiority, such a minister can have no communication with the people of England, except through the medium of spies and informers; he is unacquainted with the mode in which their sentiments are expressed, and cannot make allowance for the language of toasts and resolutions adopted in an unguarded and convivial hour. Such a minister, if he lose their confidence, will bribe their hate; if he disgust them by arbitrary measures, he will not leave them till they are completely bound and shackled; above all, he will gratify the vindictive resentment of apostacy, by prosecuting all those who dare to expose the cause which he has betrayed, and he will not desist from the gratification of his malignant propensities, and the prosecution of his arbitrary schemes, till he has buried in one common grave the peace, the happiness, the glory, and the independence of England. Such a minister must be disqualified to judge of the real state of the country, and must be eternally the dupe of those vile spies, whose interest it is to deceive him as well as to betray others. In what county, or from what quarter of the community, are we to apprehend the effects of those principles of insubordination, with which we have been so often threatened? The characteristic feature of the people is entirely different; they testify on every occasion the utmost respect for superiority (I am sorry to use the phrase), wherever the advantages of rank or fortune are exercised by those who enjoy them with any tolerable decency or regard to the welfare of their dependents. What nobleman or gentleman finds in his tenants or servants, as long as he treats them with propriety and kindness, a hostile and envious disposition? What merchant or great manufacturer finds in those whom he employs, so long as he treats them well, a sullen and uncomplying temper, instead of a prompt and cheerful obedience? This tendency to insubordination forms no part of the temper or character of the people; the contrary disposition is even carried to an extreme. If I am asked whether there is any danger in the present moment, I say, Yes. But it is not a danger of that sort which is to be remedied by suspending the rights, or abridging the privileges of

of the people. The danger arises from a contempt spreading among the lower orders of all public men and all public principles. A circumstance occurs to me which took place during the late trials, where the Friends of the People were praised from the Bench. When one of the Sheffield witnesses (Broomhead) was asked why his society declined communicating with the Friends of the People, he answered that he would tell them very plainly, that they did not believe them to be honest; that there were several of them Members of Parliament; that they had some of them been in place, and that they conceived the *ins* and the *outs*, however they might vary in their professions, to be actuated by the same motives of interest—I, who might seem to be as little implicated in such a charge as any man, felt rebuked and subdued by the answer. What is it that tends to produce this contempt of public men? The conduct of those who ought to hold out an example of public principle. I heard an Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Windham) the other day, and on this subject I will pursue him with unabating hostility, complain of the indifference and languor of the country in the present contest, and call upon them to greater displays of vigour and exertion; at the same time he affirmed, that no man in the country felt any distress from the pressure and calamities of war. Will he say this to the starving manufacturers of Norwich? Will he say it to the shivering poor of the metropolis, obliged to purchase a loaf at nine-pence, and unable to supply themselves with coals at this inclement season, from the enormous price of that necessary article? Will he say it to the landholders, whose property since the commencement of the war has been reduced half its value? What can this language of the Hon. Gentleman mean, except he means to drive the great body of the people to desperation? When I heard the Hon. Gentleman call upon the country for increased exertions, I concluded that he would have proposed to throw in his salary to the aid of the public fund, and to live contented on his own splendid income. I supposed he would have persuaded his Right Hon. Friend (Mr. Pitt) to relinquish the revenue which he derives from the Cinque Ports, and to live on his 6000l. a-year; that he would have persuaded another Right Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Dundas) to give up one of his numerous salaries; and a Noble Marquis, in another House, to give up some of the emolument which he derives from the Tellership of the Exchequer. As the Noble Marquis, on a former occasion, professed himself ready to abandon part of those emoluments, he had now an excellent opportunity to prove the sincerity of his declaration. I expected all this, and that they would not

have failed to assist their own arguments by the operation of their generosity. The Hon. Gentleman shakes his head, as if I had said something which I did not mean, or would not stand by. When formerly, in conjunction with him and others, I attacked the corruption of ministers, I thought I was speaking the sentiments of men who were sincere in recommending the doctrine of public oeconomy, and not secretly bargaining for a share of the wages of corruption. Little did I think that the opposition which they then expressed was only an envious admiration of the honours and emoluments of ministers, and an impatient desire of participation; little did I conceive that the first act of a Noble Person (the Duke of Portland) would have been to arrest from a gallant man a token of honour which he had merited by his public services—a man, to whom, indeed, that token could add no honour; but who might wish to introduce into his own profession such a badge of distinction. In Ireland, ever since the period of their arrangement, they have experienced the utmost difficulty and embarrassment, from a dispute which has subsisted about patronage, and which has at last been compromised, how far honourably he would leave to those, who are best acquainted with the transaction, to determine. In the present war ministers had been obliged to have recourse to allies both at home and abroad; both had been procured by the same means, bargain and subsidy. Among the Members of the present Cabinet, there subsists a sort of Dutch amity, and they hate one another more cordially than even they do us who are in opposition to their measures. The question is, Has the Duke of Portland a majority in the Cabinet? No; Mr. Pitt outstrips him by an additional vote. It was curious to observe the changes which had lately taken place; from a Lord Privy Seal, to be First Lord of the Admiralty, and *vice versa*; from President of the Council, to be Lord Lieutenant of Ireland; and from the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland to be Master of the Horse. A Noble Earl (Lord Mansfield) came at first into the Cabinet without any emolument; I was disposed to give him credit for his disinterestedness, but whether it was conceived to be a foolish thing, or might operate as a bad example, he was soon induced to accept the situation of President of the Council, with a large salary. While all Europe is in a flame, they seem to be engaged at boy's play; to be scrambling for places and pensions, for ribbands and titles, and amusing themselves with *puffs in the corner* in the council-room. When such is a picture of the conduct of public men, I am not surprised at the declaration of the witness from Sheffield, that he gives no man of that description credit for being honest.—

Willingly,

Willingly, indeed, would I throw a veil over such transactions for the sake of the country, were it possible either to conceal their existence, or to extenuate their disgrace." Mr. Sheridan said, that he had stated almost all that he had to say: There was nothing in his mind which would be more calculated to remove the danger of sedition than to abandon the system of corruption which at present prevailed. To reform the conduct of Government, and to correct abuses, would be the surest way to remedy discontent, and render a further suspension of the *Habeas Corpus Act* unnecessary. He proceeded to state, that many of the acts of the societies which had so much excited alarm, were only imitations of what had been done by the societies in 1780. He produced a paper with the inscription, "Lenox, Lenox, the friend to Equality," which, had the then minister been disposed to prosecute, contained matter more inflammatory than any paper that had been brought forward on the late trials. If approbation of the progress of the enemy, implied by toasts; if an unqualified claim of universal representation; if disrespectful expressions, such as—"What care I for the King's birth-day?"—were to be construed as treasonable matter, all these would be found to apply to the associations in 1780, in a greater degree than to the present societies.—These men only trod in the same path in which they had seen others go before them, not only without impeachment, but without reproach.

"If (says Mr. Sheridan) we make a boast of equal laws, if these men are to be considered as guilty of high treason, let us have some retrospective hanging, and whatever in that case may happen to me, his Majesty will at least derive the benefit, since he will thereby get rid of a majority of his present cabinet." When he recollected that his speaking and writing might have been instrumental in inducing those men to espouse the views which they had adopted, he could not, Mr. Sheridan said, separate his own cause from theirs, and he did not know what other mens consciences were made of, who could prosecute and even bring to condign punishment and infamy, persons who had been guilty of no other crime than having taken up the same side of the question of which they themselves had formerly been the advocates and supporters. He reprobated in the most pointed terms, the arguments drawn from the difference of times, and the necessity of terrible examples, an argument in every body's mouth, and which nevertheless he contended to be false and mischievous. It was re-echoed from every quarter, "Look to the example of France." The implication was a libel upon the character of Great Britain. The characters of nations arose not from the difference of soil and

climate; but from the invariable and eternal decrees of Providence, government was the seminary of the soul.

The distinction in the characters and minds of the mass of the inhabitants of different countries, according to their different governments, are obvious to the most ordinary observers. "I will not, therefore (continued Mr. Sheridan), admit the inference of the argument, that because the people, bred under a proud, insolent, and grinding despotism, maddened by the recollection of former injuries, and made savage by the observation of former cruelties; a people, in whose minds no sincere respect for property or law ever could have existed, because property had never been secured to them, and law had never protected them; a people, separate and divided into classes by the strongest and harshest lines of distinction, generating envy and smothered malice in the lower ranks, and pride and insolence in the higher—that the actions of such a people at any time, much less in the hour of phrenzy and of fury, provoked and goaded by the arms and menaces of the surrounding despots that assailed them, should furnish an inference or ground, on which to estimate the temper, character, or feelings, of the people of Great Britain; of a people, who, though sensible of many abuses which disfigure the constitution, were yet not insensible to its many and invaluable blessings; a people, who revered the laws of their country, because those laws shielded and protected all alike; a people, among whom all that was advantageous in private acquisition, all that was honourable in public ambition, was equally open to the efforts, the industry, and the abilities of all; among whom progress and rise in society and public estimation, was one ascending slope, as it were, without a break or landing-place; among whom no sudden line of demarkation separated and cut off the several orders from each other, but all was one blended tint, from the deepest shade that veiled the meanest occupation of laborious industry, to the brightest hue that glittered in the luxurious pageantry of title, wealth, and power: He would not, therefore, look to the example of France, for between the feelings, the tempers, and social dispositions towards each other, much less towards the governments which they obeyed, of nations so differently constituted, and of such different habits, he would assert, that no comparison could be made which reason and philosophy ought not to spurn at with contempt and indignation."

If pressed further for an illustration on this subject, he would ask what answer would those Gentlemen give, if a person affectedly or sincerely anxious for the preservation of British liberty, were to say, "Britons, abridge the powers of your Monarch, restrain the exercise of his just prerogative, with-  
hold

hold all power and resources from his government, or even send him to his Electorate from whence your voice exalted him—for mark what has been doing on the Continent!—*Look to the example of Kings!!*—Kings, believe me, are the same in nature and in temper every where; trust yours no longer:—See how that shameless and perfidious despot of Prussia, that trickster and tyrant, has violated every principle of truth, honour, and humanity, in his murderous though impotent attempt at plunder and robbery in Poland! He, who had encouraged and even guaranteed to them their constitution:—See him with a scandalous profanation of the resources which he had wrung by fraud from the credulity of Great Britain, trampling on the independence he was pledged to maintain, and seizing for himself the countries he had sworn to protect. Mark the still more sanguinary efforts of the despot of Russia, faithless not to us only and the cause of Europe, as it is called, but craftily outwitting her perjured coadjutor, profiting by his disgrace, and grasping to herself the victim which had been destined to glut their joint rapacity. See her thanking her favourite General Suwarrow, and, still more impious, thanking Heaven for the opportunity; thanking him for the most iniquitous act of cruelty the bloody page of history recorded—the murderous scene at Praga, where, not in the heat and fury of action, not in the first impatience of revenge, but after a cold deliberate pause of ten hours, with temperate barbarity, he ordered a considerate, methodical massacre of ten thousand women and children. These are the actions of Monarchs!—*Look to the example of Kings!*” What those Gentlemen would reply to such an argument or exhortation (said Mr. Sheridan) I know not. My answer should be, “I treat your inference and comparison with the same abhorrence and indignation with which I turn from those who would libel and traduce the character and principles of the people of England, and upon the same grounds and principles. I will not look to the example of the Princes you point out, and justly perhaps stigmatize, in order to measure my allegiance and opinion of the King of Great Britain. I am not to be misled by names; I regard not that the four letters are the same, which form the title of the despot of Brandenburg, and of the first Magistrate of this free country. I will not look to the principles or practice of a man born and bred in flattery, falsehood, and faithlessness—of a Prince accustomed to look to fear only for obedience, and to arms only for security; of one used to consider his people as his property, their lives and limbs his traffic; of one instructed to make his will the law, and the law his tool; of one, finally, whose heart must be perverted and corrupted by that which ever did and ever will deprave and corrupt



rupt the human heart, the possession of despotic power. I will not borrow from such an example a rule to estimate the principles, acts, or wishes of a Monarch, where it must be as palpably his wish as his interest to reign in the hearts of his people; of a Prince whom a love of liberty alone in the people, exalted to his present situation, and who must therefore regard and cherish that love of liberty in his subjects, as the real body-guard of his person; of a King, who, not seated on a solitary eminence of power, sees in the co-existing branches of the legislature HIS EQUALS—in the law his SUPERIOR; who, taught by the awful examples of our history, knows he is accountable for the sacred trust reposed in him, and owing his title to the people's *choice*, feels the true security of his throne to be the people's *love*." Thus would I reply, and thus would I remain, though disclaiming the servile cant of adulation, with sentiments of unabated attachment to the person of our present Monarch, and with unshaken adherence to the principle of hereditary government in this country, while limited and directed to the objects for which that and all other power on earth is created—the benefit and happiness of the people who confer the trust.

"But, if I were to look to the example of France, I would look to the prodigality, the corruption, the detestable system of spies and informers, the insolence of the higher and the oppression of the lower orders, which had distinguished the old Government of France, and which had produced all the evils of the present system. I would thence be taught to avoid introducing into this country, a system of terror and corruption; and to give back to the people those rights and privileges which riveted their affection and secured their obedience, and placed the order and stability of the Government upon their best foundations—the protection and happiness of the subject." Mr. Sheridan concluded with moving "for leave to bring in a Bill, to repeal an Act, passed in the last session of Parliament, for suspending the *Habeas Corpus*, &c."

Mr. Windham said, convinced as he was, that there were many of his Hon. Friends more capable than he could presume to be, of answering the various topics which had been brought into argument by the Hon. Gentleman who had just sat down, he would not have troubled the House with any observations, were it not that allusions personal to him had been frequently made in the course of that Hon. Gentleman's elaborate declamation. The first topic which he would notice, was the Hon. Gentleman's remarks upon some words which fell from him respecting a Right Hon. Gentleman on the other side of the House (Mr. Fox), whom, whether he called him so

or not, he certainly should continue to consider as a friend. This was a subject which he had long remarked the Hon. Gentleman had a great propensity to bring into discussion; he had before been obliged to make animadversions upon it, as it was, to say no worse of it, extremely officious; and, however the Hon. Gentleman might think of it, or flatter himself that it conduced to his views, he would hazard an assertion, that such intermeddling did not give satisfaction to either party. As the matter, however, had been brought on the tapis, he would fully explain that which he had, as he thought, sufficiently explained before. What he had said the preceding day, and what he would then repeat, was, that for mutual accommodation, he would, though he retained the sentiment, discontinue the usual form of address, and had given for his reason, that standing with each other on a different footing from what they had formerly done, he might, by persisting in it, force his Right Hon. Friend into restraint or embarrassment. This he avowed to be the real meaning of his expressions, and this he fancied must still be in the recollection of every one present: He put it to the Hon. Gentleman himself to declare, whether it was not the handsomest mode of conducting himself; had he done otherwise, the Hon. Gentleman himself was the very man who would take advantage of it, and say, that he had acted with the insidious intention of promoting that restraint and embarrassment which in truth he wished to avoid. If this was an error, he confessed it to be an error of deliberation, and one in which he certainly meant to persist.

The Hon. Gentleman had endeavoured to persuade the House, that the conduct of the persons who promoted the war was criminal; and that he (Mr. Windham) was one of the most criminal of its abettors. He was desirous to avow, that, on the footing on which the Hon. Gentleman had stated it, he was indeed highly criminal. If to have seen, at a very early period, but not so early as he could wish he had, that the conduct of the French was likely to involve Great Britain in warfare and confusion, and to be convinced, that, in her own defence, as well as from principles of justice and policy, she should have declared war before she did, if there was any guilt in considering this as a war to be pursued with the greatest vigour; if it were criminal to say that the wisdom of that House had deemed it so; if to say that the justice, the honour, and the honesty of the nation called for its continuance, then he was a criminal.

But that, he hoped, was the utmost extent of his criminality: The Hon. Gentleman had asked him whether he would have the firmness to be responsible for all this; that was what it did not become

become him to answer; all he thought he ought to say at present was, that he believed he should never shrink from the declaration of his sentiments, nor be deterred by the empty menace of any man or men, from the discharge of any thing which appeared to him to be his duty, the first part of which, as far as he could see, would be to oppose the politics of that Hon. Gentleman.

The Hon. Gentleman had said, that in discussing the subject in agitation, he would deal with him with the utmost frankness. He wished, for the Hon. Gentleman's own sake, as well as that of the House, the subject, and himself, that he had coupled another thing along with it, and condescended to use him with fairness as well as with frankness. He had however done quite the reverse, and given the most unfair and unaccountable construction to all that he had said.

Had there been any thing in his mode of expressing himself at all ambiguous, candour would have taken it rather upon the favourable side than the unfavourable one; but the Hon. Gentleman had made use of a supposed ambiguity, to pervert his meaning, and substituted his own suppositions in the place of facts. Mr. Windham declared, and called for the House to bear witness for him, that he had not, in using the word *acquitted felon*, at all alluded to the persons lately acquitted: On this point, it was to be lamented by the Hon. Gentleman's admirers and advocates, that all his tragic declamations, all his deep-toned, fine-spun periods, fell at once to cureless ruin, the foundation itself being thus withdrawn from under them. If the expression *an acquitted felon*, was to be taken in a strict legal sense, and to be criticised upon in that way, it was a solecism;—because it was a character, in that sense, that could not exist, for in that view, no man could be said to be otherwise than innocent until he was convicted; but in point of common sense, the thing was plain enough, and it was an easy thing to support it. When the Hon. Gentleman had endeavoured, with so little judgment, and so little effect, to demonstrate that the acquittal of those men (whether they were called felons or culprits, for he was almost afraid to call them by any name, lest he should be misinterpreted) had entirely proved the non-existence of a conspiracy to overthrow the government, as well as their own individual innocence, he had said, that they were proved innocent to no greater an extent, then numberless other persons who were discharged from the Old Bailey; not from their innocence being established in a moral point of view, but from want of legal proof of their guilt.

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This exultation of the Hon. Gentleman and the persons acquitted, they shared in common with many culprits, who, though absolutely guilty, are discharged from want of prosecution, from a flaw in the indictment, a misnomer, a defect in evidence upon a technical distinction, or from any other of those various legal defects under cover of which the guilty sometimes escape from justice, and strut about afterwards, talk of remedy by actions at law, and plume themselves upon their accidental escape, as if their integrity and uprightness had been positively proved and established in the opinion of their country.

Here, he said, he would rest the point for the present, and he hoped the Hon. Gentleman would not oblige him to revive it again—nor do in it as he had often done before—make a watch-word of it—and by the most unfair and insidious means propagate and pass it current throughout the world, as if it had never been contradicted; which, in his mind, was of all others the most unjust and unmanly way of sapping fair fame and reputation. The Hon. Gentleman had talked a great deal of spies and informers. It was a melancholy consideration, that such men were often necessary—and he feared they would be more wanting than ever in the situation in which the politics of the Hon. Gentleman and his friends were likely to plunge the country. The Hon. Gentleman, who in all things was more than commonly shrewd and acute, had the most extraordinary faculty of raising groundless charges, and the most extraordinary industry and art in giving them circulation: One, he said, he would particularly mention,—one originating in falsehood, and afterwards circulated with a wicked industry, which spoke too plainly to be misunderstood, what their drift was who managed it. The expression to which he alluded was the well-known hackneyed one, of “*Perish commerce, live the constitution.*”

Mr. Windham said, he deemed it necessary to refer to the many revivals of it, which the malignity and wicked designs of some men had occasioned: After having been made a handle of in various quarters, all of which he had suffered to pass in contemptuous silence; he again found it revived in a Letter published a few days ago by a person of too high rank to be overlooked (Lord Lauderdale).—Two years ago, Mr. Windham observed, this falsehood had been first circulated—and what would tend to develope the intentions of the calumniators, it was most carefully disseminated where it was supposed to be most likely to do him injury; it was in short reprinted, and stuck up in the workshops of Norwich, to alienate the affections of the people from him, and persuade them

that he was their worst enemy. Again it was brought up in the House against him by those who well knew in their hearts that the expression was not his. But he was silent—and that silence was taken for an admission of the fact. The consequence was, that the subject was revived in the volume in his hand—stamped with the authority of a Noble Peer.—“Did not the Noble Writer know (added Mr. Windham), that the charge, though false, was left uncontradicted in this House?—Did he not know, that it was publicly and unjustly attributed to me? And did he not intend, by the way in which he puts it here, that it should be applied to me, and considered as my words—if not, what did he mean?”

*Colonel Maitland* said, he should not have troubled the House, and most particularly to interrupt the Right Honourable Gentleman, did he not believe he could save some time to the House by explaining the case; a Noble Earl, a relation of his, had asked him, if that Right Honourable Gentleman had made use of the expression which was reported to have come from authority? He informed his Noble Relation that he had not, and the expression had never been applied to that Honourable Gentleman. The Colonel said, he trusted that the character of that Noble Earl for candour, sincerity, and honour, was such as not to entitle any man in that House or this country, to suspect him of doing any thing that was illiberal.

*Mr. Windham* declared, that he was really very much astonished.—It appeared, then, that the Noble Lord had left the words entirely unappropriated; and though he knew the words were imputed to him, and were not in fact his, had let them pass uncontradicted.—There, he said, he would leave it to the House.—To read the whole of it would waste too much time.—However, the words before and after it were worded with such extreme art, by the writer of the Letter, that he would read it.

Having read the part alluded to, *Mr. Windham* said, that on the subject of Parliamentary Reform, he would assert for himself, that in no instance whatever had he countenanced or supported Parliamentary Reform. Not only he did not support it in Parliament, but he spoke against it before he had a seat in that House: When it was proposed to him to be returned for Westminster, he refused the offer, because the Westminster Electors were favourable to Parliamentary Reform; and when he did come into the House, he met with much opposition, merely because he set his face against a Reform in Parliament. The ambiguity in the Letter in his hand, he left the Noble Writer to explain in a future edition, and said

said so much as a corrective to the effects it might produce.

Touching those artful insinuations against him, they cut deeper, he said, than any person in that House, but those concerned in them, could be aware of. How much could be done by such things, might be known from the transactions in another country. The House would remember, that at Paris, Foulon was killed in the most savage and barbarous manner that the inventive turn of human malice had ever devised, merely because it was imputed to him, that he had said the people should eat grass; the House would see then how much, by an artful coupling of false words with false facts, the minds of the Public might be enfrencied, and an innocent man be sacrificed.—

“Can Gentlemen,” said he, “help blushing when they think what a watch-word, what a distorted, wicked misrepresentation was made of the *Swinish Multitude*? Those words were artfully and maliciously extracted, by men who knew well their true import, from a most beautiful sentence of a most beautiful writer, and circulated in an artful form through the country—made a cry of havoc and destruction, and kept in the armoury of assassination, to be brought forth when occasion best offered; and were possibly intended to be used against my Right Hon. Friend; the author of so many admirable productions.”

Having amply discussed this point, Mr. Windham said, that he would apply himself to the substance of the Hon. Gentleman's argument: And first, as to the question, whether acquittal by a jury did not establish the innocence of an accused person, he would answer, that in a variety of views it did; but he did not know it to be a part of the law of treason, that men under the charge of a grand jury were as innocent as before that charge. Some presumption of guilt certainly attached upon the party so accused. The judgment of a jury established his legal innocence, but did not set the presumption of his positive moral innocence even at par with his guilt. If this doctrine were true, juries must determine by the smallest preponderance of guilt—but when mercy, and a variety of motives arising from it, decide in the case of a culprit, whose guilt, though to a certain degree proved, wants that extent which alone can or ought to satisfy the conscience in taking away life, the man is acquitted, though guilt in some respect attaches.

Mr. Windham also complained that the Hon. Gentleman had mistated and grossly misrepresented him, on another subject, *viz.* with respect to the burdens of the war; he had,

disgraced humanity: If so, why did not those enormities commence with the revolution, when the wildness of emancipation was at its highest pitch?—The reverse was the fact; it began at a point, and as it receded from the time of the old government, tapered into size like an inverted cone, till it spread to that extent at which the House had so often and so painfully had occasion to contemplate it. If it was otherwise, how came it that five years supposed melioration had not a little mollified the inflexible cruelty of a heart, that was at once the reproach and the boast of that degenerate people? Mr. Windham lamented, that on the great, important points of danger, he should see such a perverse determination to disbelieve. “The Hon. Gentlemen on the other side,” continued he, “say there is no danger; we say there is. They say, those accused persons were innocent; we say they were not. They say that the view of those societies was Parliamentary Reform; we say it was the mere pretext, the true object was the destruction of the constitution. They say the contagion of French principles has not spread; we say it has, and will spread further if not stopped.”

As to the other observations of the Hon. Gentleman, Mr. Windham said, he would only say of them that they composed all together a wretched, vague, coarse rhapsody, founded on vulgar topics of extravagant declamation, fit only for the lowest orders of society, and calculated for the meridian of such hearts and intellects as it was intended for—such as those of the applauded Mr. Broomhead, and the other *worthy citizens*, who are crammed into those *honest* Jacobin societies scattered through the manufacturing towns of Great Britain.

Pursuing his argument with great ardour, Mr. Windham at length adverted to the sarcasms which Mr. Sheridan had thrown out respecting the Duke of Portland, Mr. Windham, and others, long in opposition, and said, “Does the Hon. Gentleman mean to say that it is dishonourable to accept of office?—(No, was exclaimed from the Opposition side of the House.)—No!—Then if he gives up that, he gives up all that he has advanced on that subject. The calumnies cast on such things are only to be resisted by the shield of character—to that my Noble Friends and I resort. I am truly sorry the Hon. Gentleman is not ashamed of such low, mean traffic. I defy him to shew a single circumstance that can tend to cast the shadow of doubt on our conduct. The malice of the design is so corrected by the impotency of the effort, that I will not sacrifice a word in answering it.

“The Hon. Gentleman has asked why we did not continue as at first, to give honourable support to ministers without joining

joining them? Would not support without responsibility annexed to it, be mean, be dishonest? There are Gentlemen who think that statesmen owe it to their country to serve for nothing. If I am asked by them, why I do not? I will answer, that it is because I will not lay such mean, miserable traps for popularity. This being a business of mere motive, I leave it to facts alone to decide for me, and shall pay no regard to the Hon. Gentleman's declamation—it is not worth it—it is too flimsy—it will not, I think, serve him even in his clubs."

*Mr. Hardinge* said, that the calumny which had been thrown out on the words, "*Perish Commerce, &c.*" properly belonged to him. He conceived it an honour to be joined with the Right Hon. Gentleman (*Mr. Windham*) even in a calumny. He avowed that he had said, and he would now repeat, if we are reduced to the alternative of losing either our commerce or our constitution—"Perish Commerce." This was what he had said, and from this it was that the Spiders of Detraction spun that web in which they hoped to ensnare the Right Hon. Gentleman. He added, that he should think himself degraded if he suffered it to remain a moment unexplained.

*Colonel Maitland* rose again to justify the conduct of the Earl of Lauderdale as to the publication of his Letters to the Peers of Scotland, and declared that he was ready to give a flat contradiction to any insinuation that his Noble Relation intended to act unfairly. He said that the words, "from authority," applied to the Learned Gentleman who spoke last, he being then Solicitor General to the Queen; and the Right Hon. Gentleman who complained so much of misrepresentation, was not then in Administration.

*The Marquis of Titchfield* said, that a Noble Relation of his (the Duke of Portland) had never agreed to any plan of Parliamentary Reform.

*Mr. Fox* confirmed this, but observed that the Noble Duke had at the various meetings which he attended, encouraged the idea of holding popular societies for the purpose of examining the conduct of Parliament.

*Mr. Erskine* said, that, in order to discuss with precision the expediency of repealing the Act which the motion sought to repeal, it was necessary to consider upon what principles and under what circumstances it had passed in the former session; because the question would ultimately be, Whether a necessity for passing it ever existed? and, if it did, whether it still continued to exist?

The Act which the motion sought to repeal was, an Act introduced upon the spur of a necessity assumed to be imminent, to suspend



suspend the operation of a law which no minister, that ever shall exist in England, would dare to abrogate; a law, without which England has no constitution; a law which the people obtained by the virtue and firmness of their ancestors, after a great crisis in the Government, and which they could not and would not submit to part with. To do justice to the minister (for he would misrepresent no man), this truth was fully admitted by him, when the Suspension Bill was prepared. The suspension of any law was admitted to be the highest act of authority, which the legislature of this country never delegates to the highest magistrates, even the most insignificant law under which the subject lives and is protected; *a fortiori*, a law upon which the very being of public liberty depended.

But it was said, and truly said, for he admitted the proposition, though he denied the application, that there are conjunctures in all States, in which laws made for universal protection must yield to a paramount necessity, and that, as Blackstone says, the nation, in such case of imminent necessity, parts with its liberty for a short season to secure it for ever. The existence of this paramount necessity was, therefore, assumed by the minister in the last session of Parliament; when, after having advised his Majesty to arrest the persons and to seize the papers of many of his subjects, he further advised to send a message to that House upon the subject, which was brought by the Secretary of State on the 12th of May last.

This message informed the House, that his Majesty had discovered the existence of a traiterous conspiracy to hold a Convention, which was to subvert the government, and assume to itself all the functions of Parliament.

He said, that he read the terms of the message, to shew that the House did not suspend the *Habeas Corpus* Act upon a vague undefined suspicion of a conjunctural conspiracy, but upon what appeared to it to amount to sufficient evidence of a distinct specific treasonable conspiracy against the Government. Not, as Mr Windham had stated it, a general suspicion of undefined danger from seditious libellers or disturbers of the peace; but a positive, accurately delineated and defined conspiracy, to hold the Convention, which was to suspend the functions of Parliament. His Majesty's message, and the papers it referred to, were, in consequence of it, referred to a Secret Committee; that Secret Committee, by its Report, published the evidence, and declared the existence of the same defined specific conspiracy: The Chancellor of the Exchequer then moved for the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus*, on the same specific ground; and the preamble of the Act itself recited its existence.

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The *Habeas Corpus* Act then stood suspended to the 1st of February, not as to a day that had any thing particular in it; not as an epoch in the country; but as to a period within which the House expected that what had happened would take place; viz. that the matter contained in the Reports *on ex parte evidence* would be confirmed or negatived, and explained in the judicial proceedings set in motion by the House in consequence of its answer to the Crown. The Attorney General's duty, therefore, under all these circumstances, was to set the criminal law in motion,—to point it to the charges made by the House—judiciously to prepare the charge, judiciously to select the most proper criminals upon the evidence, and so to arrange the evidence, that the grand jury, and afterwards the petty jury, should have the full view of all that the two Houses had prepared. The indictment was therefore prepared, and ably prepared, to meet the whole case, and accurately pursued the views of Parliament; and it charged, therefore, as the crime, the conspiracy to hold this specific Convention for the traitorous purposes assumed by the Reports.

The questions of fact, therefore, submitted to the jury, were, Whether the defendants compassed and imagined the King's death? and, Whether, in pursuance of that traitorous purpose, they conspired to hold a Convention, which Convention should assume the functions of Parliament? and, Whether they conspired to provide arms for that traitorous purpose? and, Whether they published the various papers published in the Reports, with the traitorous purpose, *i. e.* either to hold a Convention for the traitorous purposes charged; or, to levy war and rebellion, generally against the King? The Grand Jury, which sat, like the House of Commons, on *ex parte* evidence only, found the bill. Indeed they were differently circumstanced from every other Grand Jury: For they had before found the bill by their representatives in Parliament. And, independently of that legal fiction, they were bending beneath the authority of the King, and the two Houses of Parliament; whose pre-judgment had loaded the press for months together. And upon this charge, with greater difficulties to struggle with than he ever recollected in his private practice, the parties were put upon their trials. They severed in their defences, and the Crown had its election, whom it would try first; and Hardy was fixed upon, on every principle which could guide professional men in the exercise of a great public duty: For he might be said to be privy to what he called the whole body of the evidence. The case of Hardy was opened by the Attorney General, who had been an active Member of the House during the con-

junction which led to the trials, and a Member of the Secret Committee; who, besides, attended the King's ministers assembled in Council; who was present at all examinations; and who, added to these advantages, had, he believed, inspected and studied every paper the most remotely connected with the cause; and who was more master of all their bearings, than he could have supposed the human mind capable of containing, above all learned and intelligent men, upon such trash as this House had set it to work on.

Mr. Erskine then said, that he was prepared to shew, by the sequel of the proceedings, that the juries by their verdicts had, not merely by probable inference, but almost directly and technically, negatived the existence of the conspiracy, upon which the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* avowedly was founded. In order to establish this, he said, that the Attorney General had divided the cause into three branches:

First, *Whether the treasonable conspiracy charged by the Reports, and which was made the foundation of the indictment, existed at all IN ANY BODY?*

Secondly, *Whether the prisoner, Hardy, had a share in it?*

Thirdly, *What was the legal consequence of the establishment of these two propositions of fact?*

On offering the first branch of the evidence, he (Mr. Erskine) had objected to reading the writings, and proving the acts of a great number of persons scattered throughout the kingdom; most of whom, indeed most of whose existences, were unknown to Mr. Hardy. He had insisted, that the connexion between the actors and writers with the prisoner should first have been established, before the minds of the jury should have been affected by their actions or their writings. He did not, he said, mean to argue that point, or to consider its legality: It was enough for him, which was every thing to the present purpose, that it was over-ruled by the Court, because it let in the whole evidence which the House had collected—every thing in both Reports, and a hundred times more: All that any man in any society in England or Scotland, professing the objects of reform, had done, or written, or said; even the whole, or the most material part of the evidence against Watt, at Edinburgh—Watt, the spy of Government, who was hanged to set the thing a-going. If the prisoner's counsel had prevailed in their objection, it might have been said, with some air of truth, that the jury had not before them all the materials for judgment, which had been before the House: Or, if any technical legal objection had been successfully made, to the relevancy or admissibility of any part of the Report, the same thing might have

have been said: Or if it had been laid before the jury *à la intuition*; if it had been offered as proof of a criminal disposition in the prisoner Hardy, and not of a general conspiracy, the same plausible argument might have been employed; but he undertook to shew, first, that the whole Report, or as much of it as the Attorney General thought suitable to the purpose, was received in evidence at the trial, that no objection prevailed against it, and that it was given in evidence directly and technically to establish the very proposition predicated by the House in its Report; so much so, that the Chief Justice, following the arrangement of the Attorney General, expressly and repeatedly stated to the counsel and the jury, that the general evidence was not evidence which could affect the prisoner, unless afterwards brought home to him; but that it was received to establish the existence of a conspiracy, without which he could not have conspired, viz. *A conspiracy to hold a convention for the subversion of the constitution, which the indictment charged*—the identical specific conspiracy asserted in the preamble of the suspending statute, founded upon the Reports of the two Houses of Parliament.

It was plain from this view of the trials, which no man could deny, that the major proposition of fact, without which neither any secondary matter of fact, as affecting the individual, or any matter of law for the Court to consider of, could arise, was the belief of the jury, that a general conspiracy such as the indictment charged existed somewhere. The Lord Chief Justice had expressly put the cause in that way in ruling the admissibility of the general evidence on Hardy's trial.—He said, that there were two questions of fact, and a legal conclusion, if the facts rendered any legal conclusion necessary: First, whether the conspiracy, as charged, existed at all; and secondly, whether Hardy was party to it; and thirdly, what was the legal consequence if the two propositions of fact were established. If, said the Court, addressing the prisoner's counsel, the jury are not convinced of the first, *cadet questio*, your client is not responsible, there is no matter of fact for application to the prisoner, and no law for me to deliver. This statement was undoubtedly correct, since the only way that the debated question of treason could arise was, whether the existence of the conspiracy, charged by the indictment, if found by the jury, did amount, either by inference of law, or irresistible conclusion from fact, to a compassing of the King's death?

Mr. Erskine said, he built this argument upon the foundation of justice to the Attorney General, which he willingly rendered; for he never contended that a thousand libels on

Parliament put together, could amount to the crime charged; not the most seditious intention of approaching Parliament by seditious, riotous, tumultuous assemblies; but only, that if the prisoners contemplated utterly to subvert the whole constitutional authorities, including the King's prerogative, thereby destroying the regal office, which no King was likely to survive, that this was a compassing the King's death, without any evidence of a direct conspiracy against his person. Whether this be law or not, is luckily wholly and absolutely irrelevant to the view he meant to take of this question; and therefore he protested against giving the House any jurisdiction upon it in this posture of debate, for very obvious reasons. He had already delivered his opinion on the subject; and though he by no means agreed that an advocate was bound in his own person for any statement of the law as Counsel at the Bar (a turpious and a dangerous proposition for the country), yet he did voluntarily and solemnly now declare that his opinion did go along with all that he delivered upon the trial on the subject, and that he believed it was an opinion which no argument nor any length of time would change. This, he said, was a mere digression, as it would be folly to suppose that the House should support his opinion in opposition to that on which it had staked its character with the country; and he was therefore ready, for argument's sake, to suppose the law to be as the House had declared it; and that upon the matter before the House, when viewed *ex parte* only, that there was a reasonable ground for believing in the supposed conspiracy; because still the question before the House returned back in its genuine shape, *viz.* Whether, after the judicial inquiry, which the House always intended should decide the question, and which could alone decide it, the conspiracy which the House had believed, and, for argument's sake, had reasonably believed, on viewing one side of the evidence, could now be constitutionally believed and acted upon, after decisions founded upon the view of both. To decide this question with incontrovertible force, he said, that it was clear to demonstration that the jury could not have acquitted Hardy upon any other principle upon earth consistently with common honesty and common sense. than upon the utter disbelief of the existence of the major proposition of fact, *i. e.* of a conspiracy, such as the indictment charged, existing at all.

Whoever would read the Attorney General's opening, which was published by Mr. Gurney, would see this illustrated with great force. The House could not complain that its cause was not wholly and entirely laid before the jury; for the Attorney  
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General, pursuing the views of the House, maintained, and with great ability, first, that a conspiracy, such as was charged, to subvert the government, actually existed, and that the whole body of the evidence manifested that specific conspiracy;—secondly, that Hardy was a party to it; and lastly, the conclusion of law, which, as he had observed already, could not arise, till both the facts stood established as a foundation for it.

The Attorney General having maintained the major proposition by laying before the jury the whole mass of the Reports with a variety of other matter, the benevolent invention of spies, felons, and miscreants, next proceeded to maintain that to which, he confessed, he saw then, and saw now, no possible answer, *viz.* that, if the conspiracy existed, Hardy was necessarily involved in it; and he never should forget, if he were to live for ages, the emotion of his mind upon this part of the argument, which he always considered to be invulnerable. He had said at the moment, to his worthy and learned associate Mr. Gibbs, that if, stooping under the pressure of prejudice, or distracted by the extent of the materials, the jury should be led to suppose that a *general conspiracy existed*, for which undoubtedly there was not the smallest foundation, the guilt of Hardy was a mere inevitable corollary, and certainly it was; for, take out the correspondence of Hardy from the evidence, and the whole fabric vanished like an enchantment. He was secretary of the most active and bold society; he was, in fact, its founder; he composed its original institution; he was the first mover to the Convention in Scotland; he was the first mover, also, to the holding of that second Convention, the conspiracy to hold which was the charge in the indictment. Whatever was done, he did: Whatever was known, he knew: Whatever was in contemplation, he contemplated. If there was a conspiracy, he unquestionably conspired.

Mr. Erskine said, it fell to his lot to open the case of this then unfortunate man, and, if he had known what he should have then felt, he would have shrunk back from it; not from the difficulty of the case, for he thought that nothing; but for the load of prejudice that hung about it. His learned co-adjutor and himself having the same opinions, and being resolved to pursue the same course, they had indeed but one, and that was, to grapple with the *existence of the conspiracy*; for although he did not rashly and madly admit, that the establishment of the conspiracies necessarily involved Hardy, yet he never set about the denial of it, because there were some propositions which no prudent advocate would urge: If he urged it,

it, he must have lost all credit with the honest and judicious men who were to decide upon his client's life and death.

This was so much the case, that the Chief Justice, in summing up, divided the cause into two branches, as it had been before divided upon the arguments for admitting the evidence; and told the jury, that the principal question, *and which was a mere unmixed matter of fact*, was the conspiracy as charged, and Hardy's share in it; and after having summed up the general evidence, he said, he was sorry to say, that, if that evidence satisfied them that a Convention was intended to be held for the purposes charged, the prisoner stood in an awful predicament; for he not only stood implicated in the larger part of it, *but that it had been but feebly urged by his Counsel that he was not*. The Judge said true: We forbore to urge it, because we knew that it was not tenable ground. As little reliance had we upon the law as we stated it; for, though we were firmly convinced that the defence was invulnerable in point of law, not only by the statute but even by all the authorities, yet we did not expect that the jury would prefer our statement as Advocates to the judgment of the Court, whether well or ill founded; but we looked to the great sheet-anchor of the cause, viz. the gross falsehood and absurdity of the supposed conspiracy, on which we relied, and on which we prevailed. The jury, after retiring a very short time, pronounced Mr. Hardy not guilty, to the very general satisfaction of the Public, as it was at least generally understood, and the Court adjourned for some days.

On the trial of Mr. Horne Tooke, the Chief Justice, so far from bringing into doubt or question the propriety of the former verdict, reminded us that, in point of technical form, the verdict should be proved; and nothing was hinted from Bar or Bench, that there was the smallest cause of dissatisfaction.

Mr. Horne Tooke being of the Constitutional Society, most of the addresses to Paine, relative to France, were brought home to him; yet they were found to be perfectly consistent with an attachment to the forms of our government: And why were they not? How can it be inconsistent with the subject of a free government, to congratulate another nation for asserting its freedom, though in a dissimilar form? When shall we get rid of bugbears, which are conjured up for our disgrace and our destruction?

The acquittal of Mr. Tooke, he next said, was a most important place to rest in the matter before the House; it was a great era in the proceedings, in his own opinion, quite decisive of what the House ought to do that day.

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In order to state what was done with precision, they must look first to see who the persons indicted were, and what was the direct evidence against them.

The Attorney General had properly fixed on, as defendants, those who had taken active steps as members, conferring and co-operating towards the holding the Convention; for the only persons comprehended in the conspiracy were the Members above mentioned, and Mr. Hardy, the Secretary to the Corresponding Society.

On Mr. Tooke's acquittal, Mr. Joyce, Mr. Holcroft, Mr. Kydd, and Mr. Bonney, the only indicted members of the Constitutional Society, were discharged by consent; and at that period that their evidence might be given for the next prisoner. On what principle were these four gentlemen discharged? Upon two principles only: By two, he meant two uniting together. First, That Mr. Horne Tooke was honestly and justly acquitted; else his acquittal generated no conclusion in favour of others, who stood in a similar predicament. Secondly, That HE being innocent, THEY could not be guilty. And the reason was obvious; for they were engaged in the same object, be it good or evil. The only remaining prisoners under this indictment, were Mr. Thelwall, and the other five members of the Corresponding Society, who were members of the same committee of co-operation. And on the trial of Mr. Thelwall, the Chief Justice found the acquittal of Mr. Hardy and Mr. Tooke, and the others acquitted by consent, directly in his way: He said, the Chief Justice— for none of the jury, nor any of the audience, ever entertained a moment's doubt on any part of the case. And to be sure; the consequence of the acquittals was irresistible: For how could one individual be conspiring with others acquitted? And how could their innocence and his guilt stand consistent? How could the two societies be innocent, who appointed traiterous committees for traiterous purposes, and who received traiterous reports, if they were traiterous? And how could twelve persons meet for the express purpose of subverting the Government, and yet six of them should not know what five of the others contemplated? And yet this shameful farce was kept up at an expence ruinous to individuals, until it was fairly beat down by the honest enthusiasm and indignation of a people, which it in a manner roused as from a deep sleep.

It only remained to see how all these proceedings affected the case before the House. They had suspended the *Habeas Corpus* Act on the assumed existence, on *ex parte* evidence, of a specific conspiracy detailed with the greatest accuracy; and they had suspended it for the purpose of judicial trials. They had



had not convicted one man in England, and they had made the country a scene of triumph at their defeat:—Did they mean to state to the House to go on with new prosecutions to establish this conspiracy to hold a Convention? If they said Yes, let them state the progress: Who were the criminals? What were their numbers? And why are they not now ready for trial? But supposing they meant to go on, and were still unprepared for trial, the *Habeas Corpus* Act had no operations on treason which would affect the case: If they were not ready for trial in any particular case, they might postpone the trial, under the wise exception in the *Habeas Corpus* Act, that the prisoner shall not be bailed or discharged, though not brought to trial in the ordinary course, provided it appears upon oath that the witnesses for the Crown are absent. Supposing, therefore, that individuals were still suspected of or charged with treason, or even with this specific treason, now that the matter has been investigated, why could they not be proceeded upon according to law, without a total suspension of the liberties of the whole nation? Why cannot individuals be brought in this as in any other case to justice, without arming the Crown with a dangerous authority, which its ministers in some of the stages of subordination would in the nature of things abuse, and which could not be vindicated upon any principle of general utility or safety?

He could not help thinking that this argument pressed more than is conceded, when, notwithstanding the acquiescence of the Crown, the verdicts, without being constitutionally questioned, were sought to be discredited; and because that could not be done with effect, the very trial by jury itself was to be brought into disrepute. The Hon. Gentleman who had spoke last (Mr. Windham), instead of speaking to the question, had deliberately defended himself against the attacks of Mr. Sheridan, and seemed to think every body bound to subscribe to his acquittal upon *his* bare word: For he had called no witnesses, not even to his character, which was his principal defence. He did not wish to question the Hon. Gentleman's defence, even under these circumstances. How much more then should he respect the cases of men who had called witnesses, and who had been acquitted by their country! He was sorry, he said, to see these peevish observations in that place, not because they affected the trial by jury, the value of which was too deeply rooted in the hearts of every Englishman to be impaired by any observations, but because it brought the House of Commons into disrepute, which was already but too much sunk in the estimation of the people. This consideration, he said, led to the only remaining topic—the policy of reject-  
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ing the motion. Was this a time, he said, for us to affront and teize the people with groundless jealousies? We, their servants and representatives—if we, instead of sitting here the popular branch of the government to protect them, charge them with vague, unfounded conspiracies, take care that the charge is not reverberated on us? Above all, let us attend with prudence to the present calamitous conjuncture: If in consequence your enemies, whom you affect to despise, with whom you will not, whom it seems you cannot treat with---if they should, as perhaps they may be in a short season upon our coasts to invade us—if the present system continues, who is to defend the country? Who but this insulted people whom you calumniate? The people only can do it, and they only will do it, as they feel an interest worth the exertion. Let the Right Hon. Gentleman attend to the maxim, happily expressed by the poet and no less happily applied by his great father to the case of alienated America:

“ Be to their virtues very kind,  
Be to their faults a little blind;  
Let all their ways be unconfin’d,  
And clap your padlock on the mind.”

*Mr. Serjeant Adair* said, that the subject then under the consideration of the House, was one upon which the public opinion had been much misled, and respecting which, great misconception had prevailed. It was almost universally believed out of doors, that the whole of the *Habeas Corpus Act* was suspended, and that every man was at the entire mercy of the minister. This was by no means the fact; there was only one clause of the *Habeas Corpus Act* suspended, the rest was in full force, and in every other case, except in a charge of treason, a man had the full benefit of the Act. Any man who might happen to be taken up and confined by ministers, if he could make it appear in a court of justice that there was no probable cause for the imprisonment, would be as much entitled to recover damages for the injury he had sustained, as if no part of the *Habeas Corpus Act* had ever been suspended. He was not much surprised that illiterate men should be mistaken upon the subject; nor was he surprised that designing men made it a ground of clamour, as they would upon every occasion which they thought they could use for the purpose of impeding the operations of Government; but he confessed he was rather astonished to hear the Hon. Gentleman who spoke first, fall into all the common-place declamation upon this subject, and endeavour to represent a partial and temporary suspension of one clause of the Act, as a final repeal.

peal of the whole. The Hon. and Learned Gentleman who had just sat down, had not, he was ready to admit, fallen into the same error; his extensive knowledge of the law, and his known candour, would not suffer him to make such a misrepresentation; but he had advanced such opinions respecting the trials, which had been so often alluded to, as called upon him for some observations by way of reply.—The House was, by the motion of the Hon. Gentleman, called upon to assent to a proposition of a very important nature, and he was sure, before Gentlemen gave their assent to such a measure, they would require very strong and substantial grounds to be laid before them in justification of such a proceeding. The first question to be considered was, what were the existing circumstances at the present moment, which rendered it expedient to withdraw from the hands of the Executive Government that power which Parliament had thought proper to entrust it with? He would not enter into a consideration of the motives which first induced Parliament to suspend the operations of this Bill; it was sufficient to observe, that the grounds laid before the House when ministers asked for this increase of power, were satisfactory to a large majority of the House, and to none more clearly so than to himself.

It would, the Serjeant said, be presumption in him to attempt to defend a measure which had been sanctioned by the wisdom of Parliament. The Hon. Gentleman who made the motion, and the Learned Gentleman who supported him, had rested the whole of their case upon the acquittal of those persons who had been indicted and tried for high treason. He had a right therefore to infer, that no other ground existed, or it would have been urged by one or other of those Hon. Gentlemen. If then he could shew to the House, which he was sure he could, that those acquittals made no alteration in the state of the question, the arguments and the motion of the Hon. Gentleman must fall to the ground. He had expected, that when such a motion was brought forward, Gentlemen would have come down to the House furnished with proofs, or at least with arguments, to shew that the conspiracy which was proved to have existed, was now no more; that the various societies had seen and acknowledged their error, and had determined to atone for their former transgressions, by steady attachment in future to the true principles of the constitution under which they lived. Was any thing like this proved, or even attempted to be proved? Nothing like it; every thing was rested upon the simple fact of the acquittals. He was much astonished, upon this as well as upon a former occasion, at the language which had been held by different Gentlemen as to the effect  
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of a verdict of *Not Guilty*, by a jury. The Learned Serjeant said, he ever would respect the verdict of a jury; but no man, who was at all acquainted with what passed daily in the criminal courts, or was at all conversant in the principles upon which the criminal law of England was founded, would for a moment contend, when a man was acquitted by a jury, that it followed, as a necessary and inevitable consequence, that he was actually an innocent man, and that he could again enter into society, and enjoy all the advantages of a man upon whom no suspicion ever attached. It was true, that to all legal purposes he was an innocent man; his life was safe, his property was safe, and he could never again be brought upon trial for the same fact. It was a principle, and a humane one, and very properly laid down on the late trials, by the Lord Chief Justice, that where any doubt existed in the minds of the jury, they should acquit the prisoner. In cases where the life of a man was at stake, the humanity of juries always led them to give this principle its full force. The situation of a jury in a criminal and in a civil case were extremely different—in the one case, they have nothing to induce them to depart from the strict rules of justice; in the other, they had the influence of the principle he had just mentioned; they had their own compassionate feelings towards a fellow-creature looking up to them for life and death. These were strong motives, God forbid he should say they were not justifiable ones, to incline juries to mercy. The declaration of the law, that it is better that twenty guilty men escape than one innocent man suffer, was founded equally in justice and in mercy; but it tended to shew how possible it was for men to escape punishment who had no pretensions to innocence. It appeared to him rather a new doctrine, that the verdicts of juries ought never to be investigated: That position he thought totally incompatible with the law and constitution of England. When he stated what he believed could not be denied from the highest to the lowest person in any situation of the executive government, Parliament had an undoubted power to investigate and arraign their conduct. But this, though they could do it when necessary, he did not say was necessary now. If the verdict of a jury once given was to be considered as absolutely final and irrevocable, what became of the superintending power of Parliament? What security had the people against packed juries—against corrupt judges—or against oppressive ministers? Certainly none, if the controul and check of Parliament were once taken away from the courts of justice.—It was perfectly true, that to impeach the uprightness of a judge, or the integrity of a jury, upon slight and frivolous grounds, would be

highly indecent and improper; but where a strong case occurred, it was not only the right, but the duty, of a Member of Parliament to call the attention of the Legislature to it.—He thought he had said enough to controvert the general proposition of the innocence being complete after acquittal; but though it was not complete really, it was legally so, and freed them from those consequences and punishments to which guilty persons were subject; acquittal amounted to this and no more; for still every man who reads the evidence upon a criminal trial, whatever the verdict of the jury may be, must be a judge of the guilt or innocence of the person tried.—He could not admit another point, which the Hon. Gentleman had stated and dwelt upon: It was, that the verdict of these juries had been made up from one of these premises—either that they had mistaken the case and the law, that there was a failure of evidence to prove the facts alleged against the individuals, or that no such conspiracy as was charged in the indictment ever existed at all. His Learned and Hon. Friend had insisted much on this head; he did not know what opportunities his Learned Friend might have of knowing upon what particular grounds these juries gave their verdicts; he did not pretend to know; but if asked, he did not believe it was from any of the grounds stated. It had been properly said, the first thing stated in the indictment was, the existence of a conspiracy; and the next, the attaching the criminality of that conspiracy to the individual. Now he would ask those Hon. Gentlemen, who insisted that the first proposition was not made out to the satisfaction of the court and jury, whether they think that the judges would have gone on: Certainly not; for the crown lawyers having failed in making out their major proposition, the conspiracy, would they not have stopped here, and not proceeded to try individuals upon a charge in an indictment, which charge was found to be entirely groundless, and not to be supported? But he denied that this was the case; for, not only the judges considered the conspiracy charged in the indictment, as made out; but the jury, on one of the trials, where the evidence was nearly the same as those that went before, were out an hour and fifty-five minutes before they gave a verdict that the individual was not guilty of being concerned in that conspiracy. The Hon. Gentleman had said, that, if those who were tried were guilty, he would suppose, that those who were not tried were equally so: And why were the trials dropped? Perhaps, in his own opinion, they might be all guilty; but that was not the question now before them. He insisted that Parliament was not to be directed or led by the verdicts of juries. He declaimed at length on the  
nature

nature of high treason, and what might be said to be overt-acts, under the statute of Edward III.; but this he considered as not falling within the cognizance of the juries, and was for the court to determine, upon authority, which alone ought to regulate their decision, and which had been uniform in explaining this law, from the time of Lord Coke down to Lord Chief Justice Eyre. One part of the Hon. Gentleman's speech who spoke first, seemed to him to contain a sort of slur upon grand juries; he hoped he misunderstood the Hon. Gentleman, because he conceived the office of a grand jury to be nearly as useful and essential as that of a petit jury. The Hon. Gentleman said, that the finding a bill of indictment by a grand jury afforded no presumption of guilt against the person charged with a crime, or at least a very slight presumption. In the present instance, the finding of the bill by the grand jury, though it was upon *ex parte* evidence, at least proved that they thought there was sufficient evidence of the general conspiracy, for they must have been satisfied of that fact before they could find the bills. And they must also have been satisfied there was probable presumption against the parties accused, or they would not have been justified in sending them to trial. But he begged the House seriously to consider what the result of the Hon. Gentleman's argument really was, *viz.* that a verdict by jury was entitled to more weight than the solemn determination of both Houses of Parliament, and that not upon *viva voce* evidence, but upon written documents; with all his respect for juries, he could not think their determination in such a case equal to the collective wisdom of Parliament. The Learned and Hon. Gentleman who spoke last, admitted, that in the case of Hardy, there were three propositions submitted to the consideration of the jury, *viz.* the existence of the general conspiracy; the law, as applying to the general statement of fact; and the particular part which the prisoner took in the conspiracy; and yet that Gentleman most confidently asserts, that it was upon the first of these grounds that the jury founded their acquittal. What means that Learned Gentleman or his client had of knowing the private sentiments of the jury, he did not know; but he affirmed that it was almost impossible for a man, judging of their motives merely from what passed openly in court, to agree with the Learned Gentleman.—It was perfectly clear, that the jury might acquit the prisoner upon any of the three grounds stated to them from the Bench; why then were the House to suppose the verdict of the jury was founded upon their disbelief of the existence of the conspiracy? If that had been the foundation of their opinion, they would have stopped the counsel

counsel for the Crown when they had finished their evidence of the general conspiracy, and were going into evidence of the particular guilt of the prisoner. They would have said, Gentlemen, you need not give yourselves any further trouble, because we are not convinced that any conspiracy at all existed. The Learned Gentleman had thought it necessary to have recourse to an argument upon this occasion, which he did not think proper to use at the trial, *viz.* his admission that Hardy was implicated in every part of the conspiracy, if the conspiracy ever existed.

If the House should be of opinion, that there was sufficient proof of the existence of the conspiracy, he would leave the Learned Gentleman all the fruits of his argument. The Hon. Gentleman had cited the names of many personages of distinction, who had attended meetings for the purposes of obtaining a Reform in Parliament, and had argued that there was nothing illegal in such conduct. The Hon. Gentleman need not have taken so much pains to prove so plain a proposition. Men had most undoubtedly a right to assemble for a Reform, provided they confined themselves within the bounds prescribed by law; but there was a material difference between meeting fairly and honestly to obtain a Reform, and making that a pretext to cover dangerous intentions against the constitution of the kingdom.

Whether these societies really meant nothing more than a Reform in Parliament, the House would collect from their own declarations. The Norwich society refer the world for an explanation of their opinions to their *literary representatives*, to use their own language. These representatives are Mr. Thomas Paine and Mr. Joel Barlow. Do the writings of these men contain any thing about a Reform in Parliament?—No, they declaim against Monarchy and Aristocracy in general. If a Parliamentary Reform had been their object, why enter into a correspondence with France? Was there any pattern of Parliamentary Reform produced there, that they wished to adopt? could they find there any model upon which they were to improve the British constitution? or did they expect assistance from France, to enable them to bring about the Reform they wanted? At that time they addressed the Jacobin club, and from them they took all their plans: Why did they not address the National Convention, the ruling power of France? The reason must have been this, because the revolution was not completed to the extent they wished; there still remained a King. This happened in May: But after the 10th of August, when the King was deposed, they thought proper to address the Convention, and stated themselves and France to be united  
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and engaged in the same cause ; but what way the cause of British subjects, endeavouring to procure, by constitutional means, a Reform in Parliament, was blended with that anarchy and confusion that brought on the destruction of that ill-fated country, he left the House to determine. In short, from the whole of their proceedings, it was clear that Parliamentary Reform was only a mere colour or veil to cover the most detestable and treasonable practices, and this he considered to be the case with all the other affiliated societies over the kingdom, except the society of the Friends of the People, many Members of which he highly respected, and believed their object to be what they fairly stated it to be. The societies of Manchester, of Nottingham, of Derby, of Sheffield, of Birmingham, &c. all refer to the same representatives. If any thing more was wanting to prove the designs of those societies, let the House look at their address to the Jacobin Club. That was previous to the abolition of Monarchy in France, but the Jacobins had even then given pretty strong proofs of their intention of deposing their King.

After the glorious tenth of August, when the Convention dethroned their Sovereign, then the societies in England thought the Convention worthy of being written to, then they professed that there was a common cause between them—did this prove their intention was merely a Parliamentary Reform, or did it not rather shew a determined resolution of subverting the Government of this country, for the purpose of introducing the wild and destructive theories of the French ?

If still further proof was required, he wished the House to look over all the proceedings of the Scotch Convention ; they would find a secret committee appointed, who were instructed to assemble delegates upon particular emergencies, one of which was in case of an invasion by the French. What had an invasion by the French to do with men who were peaceably pursuing a plan of Reform ?—was it a time to talk about a Reform when the French were in the kingdom ?—He next went over the resolutions of different meetings held in London, in January 1794, one of which began with stating that the law ceases to be obeyed when it becomes oppressive, and that tyranny is to be resisted with force, &c. from which he endeavoured to prove the practices that existed at that time to be highly dangerous to the state, and requiring the greatest vigilance on the part of the Executive Government ; that the Legislature was overawed, and the general conspiracy and other charges forming the major proposition of the indictment, were clearly and indisputably proved. Some Gentlemen had complained much of others for so frequently recurring to the example of France.



as a warning to this country : He saw no harm in doing so ; on the contrary, he should be surprised if it was not often done, for when we had before our eyes the effects produced in France from the revolutionary system, it was certainly much better to hold out that country as an example for warning than for imitation, as those innocent enthusiasts in their zeal for Reform wished to make it. He concluded a speech of considerable length, by wishing the House to decide, not by any arguments of his, so much as from the different circumstances which he had called to their recollection, circumstances that proved the necessity for this law last year, and which were not in any degree changed at this time so much as to induce them to repeal it from any arguments they had heard.

Mr. Fox said, that, if a stranger to the rules of proceeding in that House had listened to the speech just delivered, he would have thought he had heard a learned Serjeant pleading for a new trial, an inflammatory orator exciting to war, by a declamation on the state of France ; or an admirer of the constitution opposing some motion for altering the government ; but it would never have come into his head that the speaker was attempting to prove the necessity or the use of continuing the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act. On this, which was in fact the whole question in dispute, not one word had been said by his Learned Friend. Whenever the repeal of that suspension was proposed, the proof lay all on the side of ministers ; for, if they could not prove, that to continue the suspension was absolutely necessary, it ought not to be continued for a moment. They were bound to do more ;—they were bound to prove that it was useful. But of what use could they now prove it to be ; or what good purpose could they shew to be answered by it ? Had they discovered a new treasonable conspiracy ? or, having failed in their first attempt to prove treason, did they know of any new persons fit to be taken up on the old plot, and on whom a second experiment might be made with better hope of success ? It had been asked, wherein the difference consisted, between the state of the country when the Suspension Act was passed, and its present state ?—It consisted in this, that ministers had prosecuted the persons whom they considered as the principals in the alleged conspiracy ; that, with respect to some, they had failed in establishing the charge, and, with respect to others, declined proceeding. They were now called upon to say what object they expected to obtain, by continuing the suspension—for their old object was gone. Would they say, that they had prosecuted the wrong persons ; that the conspiracy existed, although they had been mistaken as to who were the conspirators ;

tors ; and that they meant still to go on prosecuting ? They could not say so ; for the effect of the verdicts of *Not Guilty*, at least the prudential effect, as appeared by their own conduct, was, that not a single person was now under prosecution on account of the supposed conspiracy. It was unworthy of the talents of the Learned Serjeant to attempt influencing the House, by arguing as if it were intended to set up the decision of a jury as paramount to the authority of Parliament. Was the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus Act* a question of general legislation ? He feared it was ; for, from what he had heard, there was too apparent an intention to render it perpetual. But, on a particular case, which Parliament, by what some thought sufficient ground for a temporary measure, had been induced to adopt, would it at all derogate from their dignity to yield to the decision of juries, perhaps more in the habit of investigating evidence, and better fitted to examine and decide on facts, and with more evidence before them ?—With the Learned Serjeant he did not, in one point of view, love to contend, because there was no man for whom personally, and on account of his constitutional principles on most subjects, he felt more respect, and few men possessed greater powers of reasoning. But, in another point of view, he loved to contend with him, because in general he stated his adversary's argument fairly. Hence the argument of the Learned Serjeant, and that of his Learned Friend (Mr. Erskine), as stated by him, were by no means incompatible, and both went in fact to support the motion. The jury acquitted Hardy, either because they did not find a treasonable conspiracy made out by the evidence, or because they did not find that Hardy was implicated in the conspiracy. He would therefore contend, with Mr. Erskine, that they acquitted him on the former reason. Why ?—Because all the papers alluded to by the Learned Serjeant were signed by Hardy, or brought home to him as a party ; and if the jury believed that those papers contained proofs of treason, they could be under no difficulty in finding that Hardy was an accomplice in that treason. Which was it more easy to imagine, that the jury did not think the papers amounted to proof of treason ; or that they could not read Hardy's name at the bottom of them ? The Learned Serjeant, in a speech chiefly calculated to shew the treason contained in those papers, appealed from the jury to the House :—" Here," said Mr. Fox, " let me adore the Trial by Jury ! When this speech was made to another jury (Thelwall's), a speech which has been to-night received with such plaudits, that we seemed ready *ire pedibus in sententiam*, it was answered with a cold *Not Guilty*. Such would have been my verdict, had I been in their

place :—Such will ever be the judgment of men, consulting their conscience and not their passions. But such is the partiality of the Learned Gentleman for his own chain of reasoning, that he will rather believe the jury blind to the name of Hardy at the bottom of the papers he signed, than deaf to his argument that these papers were full of treason." Mr. Erskine, he contended, had renounced no part of what he maintained as the law of treason, on the trials. But it was said, he had not rested the defence on that alone, which, if true, would have been conclusive; if he had omitted any point that could be urged, he would, in such a case, have failed in his duty to his clients. It was said from the Bench, that the argument of Hardy's not being implicated in the conspiracy, supposing the conspiracy to be proved, had been but little relied upon by his Counsel; a strong presumption, at least, that the verdict of the jury was founded on their disbelief of a treasonable conspiracy, on the law of treason, for discussing which at large, a proper time would come: He should only say then, that he maintained the doctrine of his Learned Friend (Mr. Erskine), and the admirable maxim of Lord Coke, that *judicandum legibus non exemplis*. He reprobated Mr. Windham's doctrine of making old laws apply to new cases by construction, which, he said, had made the Learned Serjeant shudder, which no judge, no jury, he hoped, would ever adopt.—[Mr. Windham said, he did not mean that juries should go farther than construction was warranted by precedent.]—Neither precedent nor authority would sanction the kind of construction which the Right Hon. Gentleman had talked of, and he would recommend to his attention the advice of Lord Hale, *viz.* That if new cases should arise within the letter of the treason, it would be the wisest way to consult Parliament, and to be very wary of making constructive treasons by parity of reasoning; for, if that practice were once adopted, no man could know where it would end. Prophetic was this expression, and to this law he adhered; for, if it were not law, there ought to be an Act of Parliament declaring it to be so.

The inquest of a grand jury was secret, and on *ex parte* evidence. The very nature of its functions took from the authority of its decision. The finding of a grand jury was not, even in law, a bar to an action against a malicious prosecutor; much less could it be adduced as a proof of legal or moral guilt against the acquittal of a petty jury. Before a grand jury witnesses might be brought, he meant not to insinuate that such had been the case in the late prosecutions, that no prosecutor would dare to produce before a petty jury, where they were to be cross-examined, confronted with other

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witnesses, and their characters investigated. A grand jury might be deceived not only with respect to the appearance of guilt against an individual, but even with respect to the existence of the crime charged. It was not by any means necessary that the judge or the jury should have said that the proof of the conspiracy had failed the moment the evidence for the prosecution had closed, although he should have felt no difficulty in saying so. They might think that there were matters which required explanation on the part of the prisoner, and therefore hear his defence; and when they had heard it, they could not refuse to hear the reply on the part of the prosecution. But were he to give up this part of the argument, and admit the conspiracy, how would the matter stand? There would then be a conspiracy without conspirators. Gentlemen of such acuteness as to define and divide our successes in the campaign, could easily conceive the abstract of a conspiracy without conspirators, like Crambe in Martinus Scriblerus, who swore he could form the idea of a Lord Mayor, not only without his furred gown and gold chain, but without body, parts, or colour, which he conceived to be the very abstract of a Lord Mayor. If they had tried every man and woman in the kingdom, and found that none of them were accomplices, this abstract of a conspiracy could not be very formidable. They had not done this in form, but they had done it in fact. They had charged certain persons with conspiring together, and with other persons unknown. Some of these they had tried, and the juries returned verdicts of *Not Guilty*. If they thought these verdicts wrong, why did they not go on? Why did they suffer others to be acquitted, without attempting to prove the charge, against whom they had as good, if not better evidence? All the guilt must now lie with persons unknown. Did they mean to drag these persons to light, and bring them to trial?—They would not pretend they did. They ceased to prosecute, because they were satisfied they could not convict. They had, therefore, virtually acquitted every man and woman in the kingdom, except the few whom the juries acquitted, of this treasonable conspiracy, and nothing but the abstract of it was left. Was it to guard against the abstract of a conspiracy, that the *Habeas Corpus Act* was to remain suspended, and the people deprived of the best safeguard of their liberties? A Right Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Windham) had given an explanation of his former words, *acquitted felon*, but an explanation as unsatisfactory as the expression itself, and asked how others could rejoice in such acquittals? “For my own part, (said Mr. Fox) I hardly remember when I felt joy more nearly approaching to exultation than on these acquittals. I rejoiced that the country was rescued from

the foul stain attempted to be fixed upon it; I rejoiced that we had escaped from the perils of constructive treason; I rejoiced that the people would see through the flanders by which they had been deluded into a ruinous war, and, as I believe they have done, more in consequence of those acquittals than of any other circumstance, recover from their delusion, and wish the war at an end."—A man, it was said, might be acquitted on a misnomer, or a flaw in the indictment, which would be no proof of his innocence:—Granted—but was either the case in the trials for treason? To what end then were such grounds of acquittal alluded to? A man charged with picking a pocket might be acquitted for want of legal evidence; and yet nobody doubt of his guilt: True—because men charged with such offences might have so concealed their actions, that although their guilt was believed, there could be no proof either of the act or the intent. But was this the case of any of the persons charged with treason?—Was proof wanting of their actions, their words, nay almost of their thoughts? In Thelwall's trial, a letter had been produced, written indeed by him, but never sent to, or seen by any person, till his papers were searched. This reminded him of the unpublished papers produced as evidence against Algernon Sydney, a circumstance which, perhaps, more than his merit, great as that was, had endeared his name to posterity; for it was one of the most valuable qualities of our nature to ascribe merit, where we saw persecution. Every thing done, said, or written by the prisoners, had been brought in evidence against them; the jury must have acquitted them, because they could not so qualify their acts, as they were qualified in the indictment; and therefore their acquittal was a complete declaration of their innocence. A jury, it was said, was bound to acquit when doubtful. The House was now sitting as a jury on the palladium of the liberty of the subject, and surely ought in this to imitate the conduct of a jury, that they would not decide against it without clear proof. It was said that to suspend the operation of it would save the necessity of bringing other persons to trial. Just such was the defence of *Lettres de Cachet* in France. They were only to save the necessity of bringing people to trial; but they might do this for the whole life of the prisoner. He lamented to hear men whom he esteemed, accustom themselves to speak of such things with patience, for indefinite imprisonment had been the instrument of tyranny in all countries.

When the late Lord Camden, a man deservedly popular, and to whom, as a constitutional lawyer, the country had great obligations, once defended a measure of Government as being only a *forty days tyranny*, how much indignation did the expression

profession excite? Even from such a man, English ears could not endure to hear of a forty days tyranny. But now, men could talk without a blush of suspending the safeguard of the subject against capricious or mistaken imprisonment for any length of time. It was said that Gentlemen who would not allow the verdicts of English juries to be impeached, had thought themselves at liberty to treat the verdicts of Scots juries with very little respect. When Scots juries should be ameliorated, and put more nearly on the same footing with English juries, their verdicts would be entitled to equal deference. When, however, he read the trials of the two persons convicted of high treason in Scotland, if, indeed, it was not an abuse of words to call the trial of Downie a conviction, he had flattered himself that all alarms about treason were at an end. In Scotland, where the House had been taught to believe that the growth of treason was most formidable, he found that nothing like treason could be proved against more than one obscure man; that this man had been in the pay of Government, for giving information against others; and that, disgusted with his employers, or more probably with the view of enhancing the price of his discoveries, he had endeavoured to inflame the minds of those with whom he associated, and to provoke them to criminal excesses. What was the consequence?—that he was almost immediately abandoned, and his conduct reprobated by the very persons he attempted to mislead, and at last fell the victim of his own violence or treachery. When he read all this, he was persuaded that men must see how unfounded their alarms had been. But the very existence of ministers depended upon alarms. By a false alarm of the Crown being in danger, they had originally come into office; by false alarms they had maintained themselves in office; and melancholy it was that some of those who exposed their early artifices with the greatest zeal and ability, had since joined in filling up the cry. Their whole conduct had been one tissue of alarms; not a moment had they suffered to pass, not an incident to occur, without agitating the minds of the people by the most inflammatory declamations on some imaginary danger. Well had his Hon. Friend who made the motion (Mr. Sheridan), in a style of eloquence, of which he knew not how to speak in adequate terms, described their expedients of calling out the militia, suddenly convoking Parliament, marching cavalry from the country to the capital, and fortifying the Tower—to give a colour to their alarm of insurrections in 1792. Were any of these hidden insurrections proved on the trials for high treason?—Not one. Why?—Because they never had any existence but in the imagination of the deluders and the fears of the deluded.

Marquis of Rockingham, had always maintained and actively inculcated the propriety of calling meetings of the people, in their respective towns and districts, to discuss important matters pending before Parliament, and make known to Parliament, as far as it could be collected, the opinion of the people at large. The paper setting forth that the time seemed not to be far distant when tyranny must be resisted by force, he would also sign, but not without some correction, for he was far from looking to the event, as the writer professed to do, without fear. If such a measure as the Convention Bill were to be introduced into Parliament, those who should call public meetings to oppose it, by collecting and declaring the general sense of the country, would act not only innocently but meritoriously. We dwelt on the crimes committed under the name of Liberty in France, till we could see no danger but from one extreme, or were ready to pardon every outrage and excess committed on the other. Why were the errors or the crimes of a people trained under the yoke of despotism, to no ideas of justice or humanity, but the will, caprice, or passion of the strongest, to be charged upon the friends of rational liberty, as things which they approved and wished to introduce? A majority of that House had voted for the abolition of the Slave Trade. If the negroes in our islands were to emancipate themselves by force, who did not see to what excess beings degraded by a system of oppression below the standard of reason, and almost of human nature, would carry their power of acting for themselves, or how dreadfully they would retaliate upon their former masters? Yet would any man affirm the cruelties they might commit to be inherent in the natives of Africa, much less that every one of the majority who voted for the abolition of the Slave Trade, wished them to be committed?

Between what England now was, and what France was before the revolution, there could be no resemblance. Our people were inured to very different habits, and trained to very different feelings. Our constitution, maimed and mangled as it now was, differed less from a republican than from any despotic form of government; less from the government of America than from that of Russia or Prussia. When Gentlemen talked of monarchy in Great Britain as the same in substance with monarchy in most parts of the continent of Europe, they put a change upon us by substituting the name for the thing. Our constitution was a republic in the just sense of the word; it was a monarchy founded on the good of the People, in a race elected by Parliament, the Representative of the People; limited in its functions and controlled in the exercise of

of those functions by the united wisdom of the nation for the general benefit of the nation. Let us return to the old maxims of administering such a government; let us remember that the attachment of the people to the constitution was not to be secured by alarm and terror, but by practical experience of the blessings derived from it; that wars of speculation, whether undertaken with the view of making conquests or extirpating opinions, were always oppressive to the greater part of the people, generally fruitless, and sometimes ruinous; that peace promoted commerce—commerce encouraged industry, industry gave plenty, and plenty content.—These were maxims so old and so trite, that no man cared to dwell upon them, for fear of being told, that he was repeating what he had learned of his nurse. But they were not the less true for being trite; and when men suffered themselves to be hurried away by a set of new-fangled notions diametrically opposite, they could not be repeated too often. If we persisted in the other course, we must go on increasing our debt, till the burden of our taxes became intolerable; that boasted constitution, which we were daily impairing, the people would estimate, not by what it once had been, or was still asserted to be in declamations against anarchy, but by its practical effects; and we should hardly escape the very extreme we were so anxiously desirous of shunning. The old government of France was surely provided with sufficient checks over the licentiousness of the people; but of what avail were those checks when the ambition and prodigality of the government had exhausted every resource by which established governments can be supported? Ministers attempted to fix upon others the charge of innovation, while they themselves were, every session, making greater innovations than that which they now called the most dreadful of all, *viz.* a Reform in the Representation in Parliament. But it was the insatiation of the day, that, while fixing all our attention upon France, we almost considered the very name of liberty as odious, nothing of the opposite tendency gave us the least alarm. Those who had become converts to this new system, saw nothing but Royalists in France, and Republicans in England—God grant they could but invert the telescope, see with the eyes of reason, and understand with the understandings of unprejudiced men.

*The Master of the Rolls* insisted that the facts which had been brought to light, on the late trials, proved the existence of a treasonable plot, beyond all doubt; and, therefore, justified the preamble to the Bill for suspending the *Habeas Corpus* Act: But he would not blame the juries who acquitted the prisoners on that charge, as he had no doubt they conducted themselves conscientiously. A conventional assembly instituted



tuted by any body of people, in this country, for choosing their own government, or making their own laws, he maintained, was treason; and, therefore, he contended, that the plot which the Secret Committee had declared to exist, for the purpose of overturning our Government, actually had existed to the extent they had asserted. In the system of spies and informers, so loudly condemned, he disclaimed having any concern; and he was confident those who conducted it, did so with honour.

*Mr. T. Thomson* replied to the last speaker, and deprecated in strong terms the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act, and the many outrages against the liberties of the subject which had taken place to his knowledge in different parts of the country, particularly by inferior magistrates, since the Bill passed. One circumstance had occurred very lately, which he thought it necessary to state in his place: He went to the Public Office, in Bow-street, where an apprentice was brought for stealing from his master an old scaffolding board, originally valued at nine-pence. The master informed Mr. Justice Bond, that he was willing to forgive him; and the Justice told him so, adding that he must serve the King as a soldier. Major Leeson's serjeant was called in, and the lad was told he must enlist with this officer; he said, he would not, and could not; he had an aged mother, whose sole support was derived from his labour, and he could not think of leaving her to starve. The Justice then said, Take him into custody; he shall be sent as a sailor: And the lad was dragged away in this shameful and illegal manner. He (*Mr. Thomson*) said, that was strange law; and somebody who heard him, repeated his words to the Justice, who called out, in a voice of authority, "Who said so?" I said, "I, a Member of Parliament, did." He said, "I must know that the King wanted men." I said, "he did, and I was afraid must want many more, if this ruinous war continued; but that this was not the way to get them; sending men to the field, I considered as sending them to the slaughter-house: But that this proceeding was scandalous and illegal." Mr. Bond said, "I might investigate the business in the House of Commons, but he would decide there; and that he had his instructions in a circular letter from the Secretary of State, and Lords of the Treasury."

*Mr. Milbanke* said, he had voted originally against the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act, as he was convinced no plot existed; and even those who contended for its existence, he hoped, after what had been proved on the late trials, would admit that the danger had been much magnified. He never doubted indeed, that in an age when two great revolutions had

had taken place so near each other, men in this country might wish to bring about a revolution here; but he never believed their numbers to be great, nor did he think the people were disposed to second their views. He condemned the new fashion of traducing the institution of juries in this country, by disapproving their verdicts; and he trusted no minister would ever make a repeated custom of suspending the *Habeas Corpus* Act, the principal safeguard of the liberties of Englishmen. He said, he thought the existing laws were sufficient to correct every attempt against the constitution. He saw no reason for suspending the *Habeas Corpus* Act at the time, and still less for continuing the suspension. He warned ministers against accustoming themselves to make encroachments upon the constitution; and wished them to be more careful to preserve the due balance between the three distinct branches of the Legislature.

*Mr. Wilberforce* rose to say one word respecting the vote he was to give. An Honourable Gentleman opposite had connected two points as settled, upon which he differed: That Gentleman had said, that all those who voted against continuing the war, necessarily did not admit that there existed any danger in the country; this was not the case with him; he was decidedly against the war, but saw serious grounds for alarm, and wished to strengthen the Executive Power. He had voted for the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act; and should now vote against the present motion, from a conviction that much danger and sedition yet existed in the country.

*Mr. Sheridan* said, nobody could expect that he rose to take advantage of his privilege as last speaker, because there had not been brought against his motion one argument that merited any answer. Gentlemen shewed themselves afraid to grapple with the main question; no attempt had been made to prove that a sufficient cause had existed for the original suspension, which he did not think justified even by the fears of the Gentleman who spoke last, lest he should be supposed to have become a friend of the liberties of Englishmen. The reason of his troubling the House at that late hour, was solemnly to ask the Right Hon. Gentleman, what would be the state of the country, which he might think would give the Act to us again? His object was to get an explicit declaration from ministers, before the House divided; whether they intended to renew the suspension when it was out? whether upon the old plot, upon any new plot, or whether they had any plot at all? the House had a right to know, and he called for an answer.

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* replied shortly; he said, he saw from the arguments that had been used, that the intention

of the motion was not so much to put an end to the Suspension Bill, as to throw a flaw upon the proceedings of that House, which might afford a temporary triumph to those who were embarked in the same cause with those persons who were the occasion of its being made. He gave it as his opinion, that it ought to be renewed.

*Mr. Jekyl* reprobated the conduct of the minister, who had admitted, that to gratify his own spleen, to obtain a personal triumph, he would withhold from the British people one of their dearest liberties.

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, it was neither to gratify his spleen, nor to obtain a personal triumph; but to obtain a triumph over the extraordinary line of argument, pursued by Gentlemen on the other side, in favour of those who had originally approved the cause of suspending the Act, that should induce him to exert himself in procuring the continuance of its suspension.

After a few words from *Mr. M. A. Taylor*, the House divided at three o'clock.

<i>Noes</i>	-	-	189
<i>Ayes</i>	-	-	41
Majority			144

Adjourned.

*List of the Minority on Mr. Sheridan's Motion for Leave to bring in a Bill to repeal the Act passed last Session of Parliament, for suspending the Habeas Corpus Act.*

Antonie, Lee	St. John, St. Andrew
Anson, Thomas	Jervoise, C. Jervoise
Aubrey, Sir John	Lambton, William Henry
Burch, J. R.	Long, Samuel
Byng, George	Maitland, Hon. Thomas
Church, J. B.	M'Leod, Colonel N.
Coke, P. W.	Milbanke, R.
Coke, Edward	North, Dudley
Colhoun, William	Plumer, William
Courtenay, John	Peirse, Henry
Curwen, Christian	Powlett, Powlett
Erskine, Hon. Thomas	Ruffel, Lord William
Featherston, Sir Henry	Sheridan, R. B.
Fitzpatrick, General	Spencer, Lord Robert
Fox, Rt. Hon. C. J.	Sturt, Charles
Francis, Philip	Taylor, M. A.
Grey, Charles	Thompson, Thomas
Harc, James	Tarleton, General
Harcourt, John	Vyner, Robert
Howard, Henry	Vyner, R. jun.
Hussey, William	Walwyn, James
Jekyl, Joseph	Whitbread, Samuel, jun.

Including the two Tellers, *Mr. Sheridan* and *Mr. Whitbread*.

HOUSE

## HOUSE OF LORDS.

TUESDAY, Jan. 6.

Several petitions were presented, and ordered to lie on the table.

## ANNUAL ACCOUNTS.

The Commissioners of the Customs brought the account of East India prohibited goods and naval stores imported in this kingdom for the last year.

The Treasury accounts were also laid upon the table.

## WARREN HASTINGS, ESQ.

*Lord Grenville* moved, That the order of the House, for proceeding on the trial of Warren Hastings, Esq. on the second Tuesday in the present session of Parliament, be withdrawn, and postponed till Tuesday next.—Ordered.

## PAPERS.

*The Marquis of Lansdown* moved an Address to his Majesty, that he would be pleased to order to be laid before the House, an Account of the pensions, fees, perquisites, emoluments, &c. enjoyed by the clerks in the public offices under Government. He said, he presumed there could be no objection, as they had been laid before the other House of Parliament.—Ordered.

## INTERFERENCE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF FRANCE.

*Earl Stanhope* said, he had taken the liberty of having their Lordships summoned, in order to submit a motion to their consideration, which the critical circumstances of the war rendered of the utmost importance; and which, by the altered opinions respecting peace, manifested by several Noble Lords, on the first day of the session, he was induced to hope would meet with a favourable reception. The state of the country was the most interesting and alarming that had ever been experienced by British subjects: It was no wonder, therefore, that the minds of men without doors began to change; and an eager desire that the path of negotiation might be smoothed, was pretty generally apparent in the people; to which he attributed what had been said in that House respecting it, a few days since, by some of their Lordships, who had not before opened their minds. If the motion he should that day have the honour of submitting to the House, should be approved, a door was, in his opinion, open for negotiation: But he verily believed, if advantage was not taken of the occasion that offered, the door of negotiation would be closed for ever. The subject was, as he had before observed, extremely important; and it was his intention to argue it with temper, although

although he had not always found other persons inclined to argue with the same temper themselves. On the first day of the session, ministers had grounded their recommendation to their Lordships to persist in the continuance of the war, on their statement of the declining finances and exhausted resources of France. That was the delusion of the present year; and on that singly they rested their arguments—the various delusions used by them in former years having been worn out, and proved to be false, by the incontrovertible evidence of facts. In all the delusions they had at different times resorted to, as pretexts for their measures, he did not mean to impute intention to ministers, but want of information; not design, but ignorance. He undertook to prove that the present delusion, viz. that the finance of France was ruined, and her resources nearly exhausted, was as false as it was absurd. He would shew, most undeniably, that the reverse was the fact. The motion he should bring forward, was founded in justice, and not merely in expediency or policy. He had learnt in his youth, that justice was an indispensable duty; and it was a maxim to which he should ever adhere. On the principle of justice, therefore, and that only, he should contend, that as the French had solemnly disclaimed all idea of interference in the government of other countries, the government of Great Britain had no right to interfere in the internal affairs of France, or in the administration of the government of the French: It concerned those who lived under it, and not us. He must produce one or two short documents, to recall to their Lordships' recollections, the declarations on which he grounded the assertions he had just made. At the close of the year 1792, before the French ambassador left this country, he had transmitted an official note\* to one of his Majesty's ministers; in which it was expressly stated, that it was not the intention of France to interfere in the government of other nations, nor would she permit other nations to interfere in her own. This declaration was full, clear, and explicit; and it ought to have proved satisfactory. Soon afterwards the French thought proper to dissolve their monarchy, and to adopt a republican form of government; and the republican constitution had been finally agreed to be that, under which they chose to live. A constitution was accordingly arranged, settled, and agreed to; but the operation of that constitution was deferred till peace should arrive; it was then to take place and be permanent: In the mean time, a revolutionary system had been provided and

\* The note sent by M. Chauvelin to Lord Grenville.

established, adapted to the circumstances of the occasion, and to continue till the conclusion of the war. In the 118th and 119th articles of the permanent French Constitution, it was decreed, "that all free nations are the natural friends and allies of the French Republic: That the Republic does not interfere in the government of other nations; nor will it suffer other nations to interfere in its own." His Lordship commended the wisdom of the French, in providing and submitting to a revolutionary system of government during the war, the exigencies of which necessarily called for great and extraordinary exertions; which could not be made, without the extraordinary powers that a revolutionary system of government furnished.

He had shewn last year, that the delusions then held out by ministers had no foundation. He had asserted this confidentially, because his confidence was founded in knowledge, and the last campaign had proved every position he had made, respecting the enthusiasm of the French acting in a military capacity, and the productiveness of their resources; and had completely disproved every argument urged by ministers in contradiction of his assertions. He trusted, therefore, that they should hear no more of the French being poor and contemptible; they should hear no more of their want of enthusiasm, of their armies being a mere rabble, that they could not face disciplined troops for a single engagement; that they were destitute of pay, clothing, and food. At the present moment the French Republic had the most disciplined, best clothed, best fed, and the largest army in Europe. Twelve hundred thousand men were in arms, completely disciplined, first by adversity, and afterwards by success. They neither wanted arms nor clothing; they had been furnished in their conquests with enough of both these articles in addition to the immense quantity which they had made throughout the Republic; they were now better clothed than the soldiers of most other nations; and as to arms, they had taken from the enemy cannon by thousands, and muskets by hundreds of thousands. He trusted therefore, that the House would hear no more of their want of clothing and arms. He trusted also, that they would hear no more of that accursed, that shocking barbarous system of starvation, that scandalous principle which held out the possibility of starving thirty millions of human beings. "Let me shew you," exclaimed his Lordship, "what this threat produced in France. A man who had been driven from France by the tyranny of Robespierre, came to this country; I conversed with him. When he saw the paper in which the system of starvation was avowed, he read it with horror. He shewed it me, and said, 'My countrymen may put me to death if I return;

return; but what can I do? I have a mother and a family still in France; how then can I endure this idea of starving the people of France? My Lords, it is the indignation occasioned by this threat that has brought forth that spirit and those exertions which were made by the French last year." At the commencement of the present year the French were inferior in naval force; and yet, the number of ships which they had taken from this country was infinitely superior to the number which this country had taken from them.

In the spring of this year, nay perhaps at the present moment, their naval force was superior to the force of this country. Could they be starved therefore now, when they had such a force at sea? Could they be starved, when they had the Palatinate and the Netherlands, all those rich and fertile provinces which they had taken, in their possession? Did the House recollect that grand and sublime project for cutting canals from the Palatinate all across France, in order to supply the most southern parts of it with provisions, and which would effectually save them in future times from scarcity or famine? When he had maintained the reverse of all those positions, every assertion he had made upon the subject had been laughed at and treated with contempt; but ministers had found to their cost, that what he had said was but too true, that it had been verified in every point. So much therefore for starvation and an undisciplined army, the two principal delusions of the last year. With regard to the delusion of the present year, viz. that the state of the French finances was rapidly on the decline, that was as false as the preceding ones; it was great and flourishing; and was it to be wondered at, when it was recollected what they had taken from the King, from the Nobles, from the Clergy, from the Noblesse, from the plunder of the Churches—he would not call it plunder—from seizing the gold and silver saints, from confiscation of the property of the Emigrants, and of those put to death; by all these means the French had realized the immense sum of *four hundred millions* sterling, and they had besides two-thirds of the land of the Republic (he would not affect, as ministers had done on the first day of the session, to call it the kingdom) in their own hands. With regard to the other side of the account, the declaration that assignats were depreciated 75 per cent. so much the better for the Convention, because it enabled them to pay off and take out of the mass of circulation, a greater number of assignats. They had an immense property, which enabled them at any time to buy them up, upon terms of advantage. They had the policy not to deprive the nations whom they conquered of every thing; they took from them indeed their specie, but in exchange they gave them assignats, by which means they contrived





inveteracy, and lend new vigour to their exertions. If the French were therefore to call in the old assignats at a depreciation of three-fourths, they could issue new assignats for some time at par. Such was the state of the French finances.—

Their Lordships would recollect what sort of a nation that must be which could pay 120 millions a year; which had paid off since the revolution two thirds of the old debt, and which was therefore, he insisted, stronger, even in point of finance, than all the Governments of Europe. If then, it was just to oppress a people because they were weak, it was folly to attempt to oppress the French people, because they were strong. In their whole conduct respecting assignats, the French had acted wisely. At their first issue, they had great armies to raise, and arms to buy and to collect to arm them, as none were to be found at Paris: The expence of doing this was enormous; to answer it, they issued assignats, and took care to keep them at par, till the object was achieved: They then found out more resources in a forced loan, and afterwards suffered assignats to depreciate, till, like water, they had found their level. The French Government, as he had before said, might call in the assignats at one fourth of their original value; and this, though an injury to the individuals through whose hands the assignats passed, was not so to the Convention and the Republic, who gained by it: It fell upon the men of property, not the *Sans Culottes*. But if ministers could even come and say that assignats were at par, the argument, though specious, would still be delusive, and would not tend to prove the riches of the Government. The French, therefore, could not be ruined unless the minister could prove that one was equal to four. He remembered the language held on the American War:—"You have passed the Rubicon (it was said then), you must either kill them, or they will kill you." The same argument was now attempted to be used. We had been successful at sea this year; but if the exertions of the French continued, they would be most formidable as a maritime power next summer. He desired the House to contemplate the consequences of the junction of the Dutch and Spanish navies to the French navy. If he were asked, With whom they are to make peace? he would reply, With those with whom they make war; with the Republic of France, *one and indivisible*; with those men whose republican constancy, whose republican courage, whose republican energy and virtue, had made victory the *order of the day*. It had been said, that we had lost nothing by the contest; he would tell their Lordships how that matter stood: We had gained some islands, but we had lost Holland; we had lost 130,000 of the Allies; we had lost the Austrian Low Countries: We have lost

lost half the balance of our trade ; for from the Low Countries and Holland we derived at least that share of the balance of our trade: We had lost what we engaged to protect: We had lost much of the best blood of the kingdom ; we had lost many millions of money ; and we had lost what was more important than all these—we had lost our character ; as our conduct made us appear envious, and as a people not desirous of seeing any other country enjoy the blessings of liberty but ourselves. “ On this account, my Lords,” said the Earl, “ I submit to your Lordships, with the utmost sincerity, the following resolution, founded on the immutable principles of justice :

“ That this country ought not, nor will not interfere in the internal affairs of France, and that it is expedient, explicitly to declare the same.”

*The Earl of Abingdon* said, if the Noble Lord had set out with shewing that the French revolution had no other object in view than merely that of its own internal regulation, that it never had, nor professed to have had, any intention to interfere with the Governments of any other countries, and particularly of this, from the cordiality of its affection for the English nation, his motion might have had some ground to stand upon. But the very reverse of this being so much the fact, as to defy a contradiction of it even from that Noble Lord himself, what must be the opinion, in every man's mind, of such a motion as this ? What must be the Noble Lord's own opinion of it ?

Does not the Noble Lord know that retaliation, “ an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth,” is the law of the Gospel ?—And here, too, is the retaliation proposed ? France would have given to this country what they have themselves, namely, anarchy and confusion, which is no government at all ; Great Britain offers to give them in exchange, what we have ourselves, (not anarchy and confusion, thank God, as yet, but) the happiness of a settled Government. Behold, then, the difference—and yet the Noble Lord objects to this. And how is this to be accounted for, but that the Noble Lord does not believe in the law of retaliation, although founded upon that christian-like principle of returning good for evil ? He does not, therefore, believe in the Gospel—and why ? because that Jacobinism, which has robbed him of his politics as an Englishman, and more especially as a Peer of this House, has taken from him his religion, and in my conscience, I think, has deprived him too of his senses.

“ *Quem Deus vult perdere, prius dementat.*”

His Lordship added, he was against the Noble Lord's motion.

The Earl of Carlisle admitted that the Noble Earl's proposition was not objectionable in itself, but objectionable or not according to the application of it. If it meant generally, that no nation had a right to interfere with the internal affairs of another country, or with its government, so put, it could not be denied, and he could not have a difficulty in assenting to it; but if so put, he believed it would not answer the purpose for which the Noble Earl had brought it forward. But if the Noble Lord meant, that one country had not a right to interfere with another, which had formed and were establishing such a system of government, as contained in it seeds of alarm and danger to the safety of its own, to the proposition so applied he could not concur in it. On such extraordinary occasions, as the French having made regulations, and propagated doctrines, enforced by decrees, and sanctioned by the authority of the existing legislature of France, which evidently and immediately tended to render the existence of our constitution insecure, Great Britain would surely be justified in overstepping the bounds and limits prescribed by the law of nations, and those who had written upon that subject, for countries acting under ordinary circumstances. That France had laid down the most monstrous propositions, and by open and avowed declarations endeavoured to spread doctrines abroad in the world, which in their nature were hostile and alarming in the extreme to other governments, and especially to such as were of a monarchical form, was in fact too well established to admit of question. He had only to refer to her decree of the 19th of November 1792, for full proof of this assertion; nor had he yet seen any thing like a direct, explicit, and unequivocal disavowal of that decree. He would not accept of any thing tending to put a different construction upon the contents of that decree, from what it evidently bore, that might be collected from scraps of paper, from verbal messages, from indirect communications, or from parts and passages of subsequent irrelative proceedings. That decree had been acted on by those who passed it. This country had seen the Convention receive a handful of men, the ambassadors of sedition from hence, in all the ceremony of their assembly; and the whole of her conduct had since been such, as to confirm and corroborate what she held out in that famous decree, and to shew that she was determined to realize the doctrines it contained, and take every opportunity of carrying her theory into practice. Neither Great Britain nor Europe could therefore rely on the sincerity of France, with regard to the explanation of that decree which the Noble Earl had been pleased to give it, till they saw that decree formally renounced and rescinded, and the

line

line of conduct, that had resulted from it, entirely abandoned. But the Earl said, he must utterly deny, that the interference enlarged upon and maintained by the Noble Earl in his argument, as that described in his motion, was by any means our object in the present war. It was not against the French republic, that we directed our arms, merely because it was a republic, but because it threatened Europe with destruction: A monster had sallied forth from its den, and menaced the adjoining states and territories with ruin and devastation; common safety therefore made it necessary to hunt it back to its retreat, and if possible to hedge it in, so as to secure ourselves and its neighbours from future attack or encroachment.

When the United States of America adopted a republican form of government, not incompatible with the safety of other states, we did not interfere; it was evident, that the happiness and security of those who were to live under it had been consulted, and the tranquillity of other nations was not likely to be disturbed by it. When that great man, who now so ably and with so much temper and wisdom guided the helm of the American government, should be lost to the world, it was impossible to foresee into what anarchy and confusion that republic might not fall; but much as every friend to America might lament the circumstance, it could not be the wish or the right of this country to interfere, so long as nothing happened that made the interposition of Great Britain unavoidable in her own defence. He for one was, and always had been, extremely desirous of peace, whenever it could be made with safety and with honour; but he saw no probability in the prospect, that a proposition so general and indefinite as that of the Noble Earl could answer the desirable purpose of accelerating peace: And therefore as he would not negative, what, considered as an abstract proposition, he did not mean to deny, yet on the ground of its inexpediency he would meet it either by moving the *previous question*, or what had been deemed more properly a previous question, moving to *adjourn*. His Lordship accordingly moved, "That the House do now *adjourn*."

Lord Auckland said, that in order to decide how far the motion of the Noble Earl had a claim to be received and adopted by their Lordships, the mind was naturally led to examine the position of public affairs, under which such a question was brought forwards. It had been his wish to have entered into this examination on the first day of the session, but he had given way to others till he thought it too late to offer himself to the exhausted attention of the House. Considering the part which he had taken in the commencement of the war, and that he had been personally much conversant in the opening of the scenes

scenes which now afflict and appall mankind, he should think a farther silence unmanly and unbecoming.

He felt, however, that he was entering into a discussion of great extent and difficulty, in which it would be necessary for him to state many painful truths, which undoubtedly had passed through the minds of many men, but which no man had yet attempted to bring openly into one point of view:

He begged leave to premise, that he had now been separated near a year from all official duties, and during the latter part of that period, from all official communications. He would be understood however to mention this, not for the purpose of withdrawing himself from any share in the embarrassment of the moment: He was willing to meet the whole responsibility before God and man, as far as he could be involved in it by an adherence to opinions which he conceived to be well founded: Still less had he the vanity to insinuate that he could have given better advice than had been followed: He mentioned it, because it relieved him from those reserves which naturally and properly attach on every man who is to speak on public affairs after having recently quitted a long career of public embassies.

He had passed the period, to which he alluded, in retirement, and had taken no concern in the events of the war beyond the general interest which had compelled him to advert to the current and progress of our calamities. The accumulation of those calamities had been without intermission or respite, and (contrary to the varied character of all other wars) without any incident of a prosperous kind to diversify the scene, or to alleviate the sentiments excited. At least it had been no alleviation to his mind, that our enemies, though triumphant abroad, were suffering unexampled misery at home. It was indeed true, that, in the seven months of which he was speaking, the interior of France had exhibited scenes of ferocity, blood, and desolation, at which humanity will shudder as long as history shall exist. But it must at the same time be confessed that the armies of France in the prosecution of the war, and the councils of France in the direction and resources of the war, had manifested great energy and great ability. And it had been the inscrutable will of Providence, that their efforts, though founded in crimes, and maintained and maintainable only by crimes, should have the fullest success.

He had ascribed this success to the will of Providence; still, and consistently with religious submission, he might be permitted to inquire how far it had been brought about by the operation of natural and human causes.

While

Whilst our enemies were disregarding the main column of the allied armies, supported as it was by a chain of strong places, extending from Charleroy to Landrecies; whilst, contrary to all the rules of war and of prudence, they were risking an attack on each flank of that column; whilst they were trying every thing and hazarding every thing; the conduct of a principal part of our allies was of a very different description. He would say nothing of its good faith, its morality, or its wisdom; he would only observe, that the alliance alluded to had not been merely useless; it had been positively prejudicial to us; it had led us to miscalculate our means; and our supposed strength became worse than a known and real weakness.

Lord Auckland added, that it was a question open to controversy, but he thought he could shew and prove, to any unprejudiced mind, that it was much less the force of the enemy (what the Noble Earl had been pleased to call "Republican energy and virtue"), than the disjointed, ill-combined, and discordant conduct of the allies, which had brought us to our present position. He would pass over the details which had led to that position; unhappily they were too well known. He would come to the predicament of the day, in which the public opinion seems to be balanced between two doubts; the doubt whether the war can be prosecuted with any hope of success; and the doubt whether any measure can be adopted towards attaining a pacification.

That these kingdoms should have fallen into such a position he would confess he had not expected; and yet it might be in the recollection of many, that his speeches on the subject had never been sanguine; he had repeatedly stated in that House the disadvantages and danger of contending with a populous nation of enemies, who had abandoned every restraint of law, benevolence, and religion, to which, he trusted, Great Britain would ever adhere; and who had rejected all the received notions of public faith and private property; and who, converting themselves into an armed democracy, had declared war against mankind. Still he had not foreseen the unbounded success of their arms; he might add, that he was not more astonished by that success, than the nameless leaders of the victorious armies confess themselves to have been; and he might appeal for the truth of his assertion to the printed bulletins of the Convention. Nothing less than such success could have kept together the popular mass, which must otherwise have fallen to pieces under its own weight and pressure.

The sad result is, that Europe is now trembling on its life. The southern kingdoms of the continent are feebly struggling to maintain a defensive war, and sometimes soon likely to be

over-run and subverted, or at least to be reduced to some treaty as fatal, perhaps, as submission to conquest. The late Austrian Netherlands are become part of France: And the independence of Holland, the protection of which had been an original and primary object of the war—that independence which we were bound by every consideration of national interest, and national honour, to restore and support—that independence was in extreme danger, perhaps within a very short space of time it would be lost. Such an event, grievous to us as it might be, was not more improbable than many events which had lately taken place; nor, in his opinion, would its mischiefs be materially palliated or qualified, by the sort of negotiation described in the King's Speech. He now entreated their Lordships to carry their views to more distant scenes; the situation of the West India Islands was become anxious and even urgent: And the infernal policy of arming the inhabitants in a mass had been attempted to be extended to the negroes. If we next look to the comparative state of our naval power, we shall see, it is true, a larger and more efficient force than Great Britain ever possessed in the second year of any war. The number of ships of the line in commission (independent of guardships) were sixty, on the 1st of January 1759; seventy-five on the 1st of January 1779; and eighty-nine on the 1st of January 1795. He stated this circumstance from a desire to render justice to the efforts of the Admiralty, at a moment when it was become the fashion to disparage them. On the other hand, he was unable to shut his eyes against the formidable and increasing navy of the enemy; nor could he conceal from himself the possibility that the French naval force might soon derive new strength from an accession of Dutch naval stores, Dutch seamen, Dutch ships of war, and Dutch ports. The consequences to be apprehended, both in a naval and commercial point of view, from this state of Europe, of the Colonies, and of the maritime force, were unnecessary to be farther discussed; he wished only to shew, that he was not blind to the existing emergency, in forming a judgment on the question which had been and might be brought forwards.

Under these circumstances (and he wished neither to aggravate nor to palliate them), with the prospect of farther misfortunes, and with no immediate hope of farther aid, their Lordships were called upon to decide, whether it would be wise to go on forward with overtures for peace, and particularly, “Whether it would be expedient to declare, that this country will not interfere in the internal affairs of France?”

He would meet this proposition by assuming, that it was fairly and earnestly intended, to facilitate and promote a pacification,

fication, compatible with the honour, security, and interests of these kingdoms. In order to decide how far it was really calculated for purposes so essential, having given a general statement of our actual position, he would next consider the object to which we are directing our steps: It would at least be prudent to do this before we decide as to the means of arriving at that object.

When we were forced to engage in this arduous struggle, he had fully concurred with his Majesty's ministers in opinion, that this country had a just pretension to prosecute the war, not till she should obtain, but for the purpose of obtaining, indemnity for the past, as well as security for the future.

It was evident, however, that this claim of indemnity was liable to be qualified and suspended, or even renounced, according to contingencies and circumstances, and the fate of the war. With respect to the other consideration, he still thought that it was the duty of the King's government, because it was the essential interest of the kingdom, to prosecute the contest, till a peace shall be accomplished which may be secure and promise permanency.

The question of national security, in framing a pacification, was one of those which in all preliminary debates should be left generally and indefinitely. It could not, without mischief, be reduced to specific terms and conditions in that House; its first arrangements must necessarily be confided to the prerogative of the crown and the responsibility of ministers.

As far as general expressions can go, he thought the line of pacification well described at the opening of the last session by a Noble Earl (Guildford), who moved, as an Amendment to the Address which he (Lord Auckland) had seconded, "That his Majesty should seize the earliest opportunity to conclude a peace, by which the permanent safety of his subjects, and the independence and security of Europe, may be provided for." He had thought that Amendment objectionable only because it was superfluous, and because it seemed to prescribe to his Majesty's ministers a line of duty which he was sure would never escape their recollection, amidst the multiplied cares and anxieties of the war. The Amendment itself contained solid sense, and a principle of just and wise policy respecting the independence of Europe, which, he trusted, we never should be reduced to abandon.

Lord Auckland proceeded to state, that he never had objected, and never would object, to any pacific proposition, solely on the ground of its tendency to an acknowledgment of the republican form of government which had been introduced into France. It was with reluctance that he should ever



consent to such an acknowledgment; but he had always thought it a possible event; at present it was more than possible. The war was not made to prevent France from giving to herself the constitution that she may prefer; but to prevent her from giving to Great Britain, and to her allies, all the wretchedness and horrors of a wild democracy. The Noble Earl had stated, that the Convention had lately renounced the intolerant and malignant principle to which he alluded; but the decree which the Noble Earl had cited to prove this, was only a provisional clause of a constitution not yet in force; let the doctrine of that decree be firmly and unequivocally established, and he was ready, on his part, to say, that he never would interrupt France in her political plans and arrangements at home, which she might multiply and change as often as she probably would do, before she could arrive at any semblance of tranquillity.

Lord Auckland added, that in the eventual acknowledgment of the French Republic, he should greatly deplore the dispersion and irretrievable ruin of many illustrious families and excellent individuals, involved in the abolition or continued suspension of the French monarchy. With this sentiment, and so long as the war may last, he should think it a fair pretension to direct our efforts to the restoration of the monarchy; and this was the more just, because to him it was evident that a re-established monarchy would give to Europe the best security for a permanent peace. In the mean time, he never had understood, and never would allow, that this country could pledge her good faith, rather to bury herself under the ruins of Europe, than to acknowledge the French Republic.

He had already intimated, that it was eligible to leave to ministers a full discretion in the arrangements and concessions to be made towards obtaining a safe pacification. The unprovoked manner in which war was declared against us, certainly gave us a just title to indemnity, if we could acquire and maintain it; but that indemnity would cease to deserve the name, if it were to consist in new possessions to ourselves, whilst our neighbours and allies were to be deprived both of their territory and their independence.

It had often been a lesson which Providence had in vain given to mankind, that the bloodiest and most expensive wars should end as they began, without any valuable acquisition to either party, and sometimes on the strict principle of the *status quo*. This was a hard measure towards the party which had not been the aggressor, and therefore he sincerely hoped that it would not be our lot in the close of the present war. He did not mean by these remarks to disparage the value of our conquests;

quests; he was well aware of their importance, both to our commerce and navigation. It was the duty of his Majesty's ministers, on the one hand, to give up nothing improvidently or unnecessarily; on the other hand, they would recollect that in the great consideration of future peace, prosperity, and security, the independence of neighbouring states might be more important to us than any aggrandisement of possessions.

What were the deductions from what he had thus stated? He had not commenced the war for any unreasonable, unjust, or wild object; he was not prosecuting the war to gratify an obstinacy of opinion; he was desirous of peace, if it were accompanied by any hope of security and permanency: But he did not think it either wise, or honourable, or necessary, to express a despondency which we had yet no cause to feel; to crouch with a timid precipitancy; and to throw ourselves at the feet of an unprincipled and malignant enemy. He did not think that, in the present circumstances, any negotiation could be opened, or any treaty concluded, which would not be more dangerous than a continuance of the war with all its difficulties.

If our condition were so deplorable, as some affect to think it, the supposition that France would make peace with us was a gross absurdity; on the other hand, if we still possess the means and resources, which he believed us to possess, we ought not yet to make peace with her.

Again, if it be true, as some have urged, that France is exhausted and sinking into a state of inability, it is our duty and our interest not to give peace to her, till the independence of Europe is replaced and ascertained: On the other hand, if her condition is as vigorous, and full of resources, as the Noble Earl and others are pleased to contend it to be, she will not make peace with us; and we have no safety, nor hope of safety, but in a great and desperate effort. Thus, in every point of view, with a reference to the means and resources of either country, it was his opinion that, in the present circumstances, we have no alternative but in firmness; and in the precept of the steersman, alluded to by a Noble Marquis (Lansdown) in a former debate—"Steady! steady!"

With respect to the past conduct of the war, or its future direction and plans, those were considerations which he did not at present mean to touch.

In examining our position and prospects, he had been solicitous to avoid two extremes—the extreme of those who seem to think that peace may be had at any moment, and who talk of it as if they had the treaty already prepared and in their pockets;

pockets ; and the extreme of those who think that peace is utterly unattainable.

He was far from adopting the first of those opinions. The present leaders of the French Republic were certainly less abandoned in principle, and less ferocious in manners, than the 107 monsters who were brought to the scaffold on the 28th of July. But they might naturally be elated by their successes ; they might have, or might suppose that they have, an interest in prolonging the war ; they might think it dangerous to bring back into France their own victorious armies ; they might persuade themselves that England has much to lose, whilst they have nothing that can be taken, on which they place any value. In a word, their system might be (what their conventional debates proclaim it to be), farther conquest, and not peace.

On the other hand, he could not admit implicitly the second of those opinions. It might be contrary to the individual interest of the leaders of the day in France to make peace ; but it has been seen that they are leaders only of a day. It must be the interest, it must be the wish of the people at large to be restored to tranquillity.

The fermentations of a great country may be violent for a time ; but such a state is not natural to the human mind, and ought not to be considered as permanent. In public as well as in private life, a wise man will take his precautions, as far as circumstances will allow, against calamities, however improbable ; but the general line of his conduct will be directed by his estimate of probabilities. And though it is a characteristic of the present age, that few events happen according to reasonable calculations, that is no ground for not continuing to calculate, and to act on the deductions of common sense and the experience of ages. France requires repose ; her inhabitants in general wish it ; all their habits and connexions, and dearest interests of life require it. Their finances are stretched to the utmost : Their population requires peace ; their agriculture, commerce, manufactures, and subsistence, require it.

In saying that the French finances were stretched to the utmost, he desired not to be understood to draw any flattering or conclusive reasonings from the imperfect details which were received of the resources and means of the enemy. He had seen in their last statements, that they cannot reduce their expences to less than twelve millions sterling per month ; and that the assignats in circulation amount to two hundred and forty millions sterling ; a sum seven times as large as the whole circulation of coin within this rich and commercial kingdom.

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He was also aware that they had no public revenue, except what was drawn from private oppression and robbery; for the system of French taxation, which the Noble Earl had described, certainly deserved no other name. Nor could any considerable resource be expected from the further plunder of the churches, of which others might speak with complacency, but which he must ever regard with indignation and abhorrence.

He was nevertheless sensible, that the revolutionary government might overleap difficulties which would overwhelm any other civil establishment. On this point, also, he was desirous to avoid extremes—the extreme of those, who, on the one hand, consider the French resources as exhausted; and the extreme of those, who, on the other hand, assert that the French resources are inexhaustible. It was evident that the resources in question were unsound and unnatural; they were stretched beyond what any other nation would bear; but he did not know that they were yet stretched beyond the bearings of those unhappy men who are the subject of that anarchical despotism which is called the French Republic. We had seen their perseverance, and were suffering under it; we had seen that in the paroxysms of their domestic contests, they could redouble their exertions in their foreign wars; their armies had fought with unabated activity; indifferent under what government, under what faction, under what general. It was contradictory to all the inferences of common sense, that such a system could have subsisted during five years; but we are not to infer, from that circumstance, that it will continue to subsist. Reason must and will at last prevail: The essential consideration then would be, whether we can in the mean time save ourselves from the ruin which is overwhelming so many other countries.

Let the impossibility of maintaining the contest be demonstrated, and he would acknowledge that the moment was come for saying—

“ *Oremus pacem, et dextras tendamus inermes !* ”

But, thank God, that was not the case; and till it was, we could not doubt, that, whilst the revolutionary doctrines continue, and profess to aim at the destruction of our constitution, every exertion should be made that may ultimately suppress them. In this sense, and in this only, he would interfere with the French Government, and their internal affairs. Their laws respecting commerce and finance might be the reveries of madmen; but whether the inhabitants acquiesce in such laws, or rebel against them, he could wait their decision per-

perhaps with curiosity, but certainly without interference. They might glory in their robberies and murders; but, though he would not give refuge to the robbers and murderers, and though in a moral and religious sense it might be beneficial to mankind, that such of them as have not yet expiated their crimes by each others hands, should suffer punishment in this world; he would not draw the sword to bring them to justice. They might proclaim themselves atheists, but he would never step forwards to prescribe a religion to them. So long, however, as they insist on extending their code of rapine, blood, and irreligion, to the establishment under which he lived, he should feel that he owed it to his country, to his sovereign, to himself, and to his posterity, to resist them even to death. In short, he never would consent to acknowledge the French Republic as founded on principles of unqualified and universal equality, and on what has been absurdly called the imprescriptible rights of man. At the same time, if all the collateral objects of the war were adjusted, he might be induced to acknowledge the republican form of government, or any form whatever, which France or any other country might institute for her own interior purposes; and subject to this explanation, he protested against any wish or intention, past, present, or future, to interfere in the internal affairs of France.

Under all these considerations, affecting, mortifying, and alarming as our position in many points of view might appear, he was of opinion that a secure pacification could be attainable only through that firmness and energy of conduct which the King's Speech had recommended at the opening of the session, through a wise application of the means to be employed, and through the effects which time may produce.

He asserted that the war had been inevitable; and perhaps no individual now living knew more of its origin, or had deprecated more earnestly the explosion which took place on the 1st of February 1793: He had laboured with heart and hand to avert it. He must repeat that it was inevitable. He believed that peace was now impracticable. In a word, he saw no alternative, but in that steadiness of national courage which may produce a safe and honourable peace. Holland may be lost; Spain may be lost; France might gain access to all the ports of Europe, from the borders of the Baltic to the lines of Gibraltar; still he could not forget that Great Britain has heretofore coped with her, aided as she was by Spain and by Holland, and by other countries.

He would conclude by remarking, that whatever sentiments or reflections his speech might suggest to their Lordships, they would at least give him credit for a good intention. He

neither had nor could have any interest in this world which could press more closely on his feelings, as a Peer of Parliament, and as a domestic, moral, and religious man, than to contribute, under the protection of Heaven, to extricate his country with safety and honour from the present emergency. It only remained for him to offer his thanks to their Lordships for their patient attention.

*The Earl of Scarborough* rose next, and in a very low tone of voice delivered his opinion with respect to the motion. It was scarcely possible for any person, at a small distance, to hear two of his Lordship's sentences clearly; it is idle, therefore, to attempt to report his argument completely. He began with alluding to the debate on the first day of the session, spoke of the great alarm under the impression of which he came down to the House, and said, he had listened to the debates with all the attention in his power, and thought the part the House had after due deliberation adopted, was the most wise to be pursued, under the pressure of such a variety of critical and arduous circumstances. He complimented Lord Stanhope on his good intentions, his personal virtue, and the candid and fair reasoning with which he had supported his proposition. He said, he well knew that his meaning and intention were pure, and his purpose to do what he thought right at all hazards; *Fiat justitia ruat cælum*, being his principle. But he saw grounds, and those strong grounds of objection to the coming into such a proposition at present. He admitted, that, as a general maxim applied to ordinary occasions, it was unjust for one country to interfere with the internal affairs or government of another nation; but when it was matter of notoriety that the foreign nation was making it an essential principle of her government to endanger the safety of the government of another country, that country was undoubtedly justified, on motives of self-defence, so to interfere; and, upon the impulse of this feeling, he had last year thought the Noble Earl with the green ribband (Lord Mansfield) perfectly warranted in that position, respecting which the Noble Earl had thought it necessary to bring forward a distinct motion, and call for its specific discussion. He alluded to the advising this country at any expence to promote an internal commotion in France, if a considerable body of the inhabitants were known to be adverse to the existing government. For a time, he declared he thought such a practice not only justifiable but expedient. Among other reasons for objecting to the motion then before their Lordships, the Earl stated, that he thought it would not answer the end proposed.

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: *The Earl of Mansfield* said, that having been alluded to by the Noble Earl who had just sat down, he thought it necessary to take up a few minutes of their Lordships time, but would promise to confine himself strictly to the question, in order to avoid going into length. He was ready to agree with the Noble Earl who made the motion, that nothing could be wise that was not just; no man could deny that as a general principle, but much depended on the application of it, since it was evident to the most ordinary understandings, that what might be just under some circumstances, might be highly unjust under others of a contrary nature, and so *vice versa*. Upon that distinction rested all the difference of opinion respecting the propriety and expediency of adopting the proposition moved by the Noble Earl that day, or of avoiding the present recognition of it. In the course of his argument, the Noble Earl had contended, that our interference with the internal affairs of France was not only unjust, but contrary to the law of nations: So far from this being the case, he utterly denied that it was unjust, and he would venture to assert, that no writer on the law of nations countenanced the doctrines of the right of interference of one country with the government of another, to the extent to which the Noble Earl had argued it. As to what he had said last year upon the subject, which had so peculiarly challenged the animadversion of the Noble Mover of the present question, in the manner referred to by the Noble Earl who spoke last, he had not the smallest objection to restate his declaration, and the more especially as it was immediately connected with the present question. He had said, that if it were ascertained that there was a considerable body of people in France, who, attached by old prejudices to monarchy, were adverse to the existing rulers, and the system of tyranny under which they groaned, and were ready to take up arms to overturn that system, it would be well worth the while of this country, at almost any expence, to assist the efforts made by such a body of people. That had been his sentiment last year, it continued still to be immovably fixed in his mind, and he had not the smallest doubt that the sentiment would go with him to the grave.

As there were obviously two parties in France; the one contending for the power of arbitrary rule; the other making every possible effort to put an end to that intolerable tyranny and grinding oppression, the certain consequence of anarchy and confusion,—to assist the latter was not only an act virtuous and laudable in itself, but beneficial to France, and highly serviceable to Europe at large.

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He disclaimed any desire to dictate a particular form of government to France, nor had that been the object of the war; but he must insist on the policy of this country's interfering in the internal affairs of France to the extent that he had described, in a war, the great and necessary aim of which was to provide for our own security.

The Earl said, he could not better illustrate his meaning, than by putting this case to their Lordships: If one man met another with an uplifted dagger in his hand, which he told him he was determined to plunge in his bosom, ought the man so forewarned of his danger to endeavour to wrest the dagger out of the assassin's hand, or to wait patiently and suffer the latter to accomplish his threat, and put an end to his existence? Would a single individual stand forward, and openly maintain that a doubt could for a moment exist, how the question ought to be resolved? As little doubt, he conceived, could be entertained by any rational being, in regard to the conduct, which, after the decree of the Convention of the 10th of November, it became the immediate and the indispensable duty of this country to pursue. There was but one course for a great and free nation to take, and that, in his opinion, his Majesty's ministers had happily chosen. The Noble Earl, who had begun the debate, amidst all his elaborate eulogiums on the fortunate consequences of the revolution to the French, the very reverse of which, were it necessary, he flattered himself, he could easily prove, had thought proper to give the present violent democracy of France the name of a republic; so little did it deserve that respectable title, that he could not but consider the terming it a republic a slander on every real republic; and in like manner to talk of the freedom of the French, was to libel the name of liberty, and indirectly to calumniate the independence, security, happiness, and comfort, enjoyed by British subjects, in respect to their persons, their property, and their religion, under the truly free government of our own country. That the right of one country to interfere with the internal affairs or government of another, where either, if unrestrained, were likely to produce consequences mischievous to itself, and other states, was no new maxim in politics; but that, on the contrary, it had been recognized and acted on in all times, ancient and modern, might be seen in one instance by a reference to that historian, whose work was fraught with so much valuable information, that it might well be termed a rich mine of valuable historical knowledge. In that book, in the account given of the wars of Sparta and Athens, it was stated, that, as often as each got possession of the small towns belonging to the other, the Spartans being



aristocratic, and the Athenians democratic, they took care to infuse their respective principles into their new subjects. In the memorable instance of our uniting with Henry IV. of France, who blamed Queen Elizabeth for her interference with the internal affairs of France? So in an instance that occurred in more modern times, the famous war in Germany that preceded the treaty of Westphalia, and by way of distinction was called the thirty years war, the history of which it was formerly thought necessary that every diplomatic character should make himself master of, and which a friend at Ratisbon advised him to read, but as it consisted of eight large volumes folio, he owned he had not entirely read; would any man acquainted with history contend that in that thirty years war the internal regulation of the governments of Germany had not been interfered with? In the wars of the Grand Alliance, which the Noble Earl would not surely disparage, and also in the war of the Succession, was not the internal government and constitution of Spain interfered with; and was it forgotten that it was an article in the treaty of Utrecht (a treaty in which he avowed there was much that was exceptionable), that the King of France should never be allowed to wear the crown of Spain, if it were possible to prevent it? So wise and sound a policy was it to keep any one State in Europe from becoming, by the accession of inordinate and overbearing power, so much more formidable than its neighbours, that he trusted if the two crowns of France and Spain were in these our times to be in danger of being united, there was not a Noble Lord in the House, who would not say that it would be the interest of this country to make war immediately, or take any other means to prevent a junction, which threatened to prove so fatal to the tranquillity and safety of Europe. But to mention last of all a still more recent instance within the recollection of all who heard him, viz. our conduct in 1787, when this country had the good fortune to preserve the independence of Holland, by rescuing her out of the hands of France, an event, which was so loudly approved of and applauded by men of all parties in this kingdom—did not we ourselves interfere with the internal government of Holland? Having stated these strong instances,\*

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\* Had not his Lordship been mindful of his promise not to go into length, and anxious to adhere to it, he would scarcely have failed, we presume, to have mentioned the memorable instance of the war of Sweden and Denmark, in which there was an avowed interference of one country with the internal affairs of the other, or the still more memorable one, and more important instance to Englishmen, because it must be dear to the  
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of its having at all periods been deemed expedient and warrantable for one country to interfere with the government of another, when it was obvious that something injurious either to its interests or safety was meditated or avowed, his Lordship took notice of the two violently opposite and contradictory arguments, which the Noble Earl had insisted on in respect to the value of the French assignats last year and at that day. Last year he had laid stress on the assignats being at par, and confidently asserted their superiority over a British guinea or bank note, stating it as an irrefragable proof of the high credit and powerful resources of the French. In the course of that day, he had taken another and a very different ground; he had insisted that the same result was to be collected from a circumstance of a diametrically opposite nature. "You say that assignats are at 75 per cent. discount, I allow it, says the Noble Earl, and I take that for my criterion of the still increasing resources of France." It was rather more than could be expected for the Noble Earl to imagine that those who maintained a difference of opinion could suffer him, without noticing so extraordinary and so dexterous a mode of reasoning, to avail himself of the arguments each way; but as he had chosen to amuse their Lordships that evening with pushing the position he had maintained to a still greater extent, and to assert that the more assignats were depreciated in value, the more advantageous it would be to the French government, Lord Mansfield said, he would only remark that it put him in mind of a whimsical rant in one of Dryden's plays—a Lover speaking of his passion and despair says,

"My wound is *great*, because it is *so small*."

On hearing which, the witty Duke of Buckingham replied,

"Then 'twould be *greater*, were it *not at all*."

The Marquis of Lansdown said, he did not intend either to defend or object to the motion, not meaning to enter into all the arguments to which the question was liable, at that time, because he knew that Noble Lords neither expected nor came down prepared for a long debate, and that consequently they wished not to be detained. For these reasons he would not take up their attention for any vast length of time. He professed himself happy on this occasion to find the temper of the

recollection of every British subject, the interference of the Dutch with the government of this country, and the landing of the Prince of Orange in England in the reign of James II. in 1688; an event which occasioned the Revolution, from whence we date the permanency of our constitution, our equal laws, our security of life and person, and all those rights and blessings which constitute true happiness, and form the basis of real freedom.

House so moderate. It was from calm consideration and dispassionate debate only, in such arduous and difficult moments as the present, that wise counsels could be expected to result. He augured favourably from the fair, manly, liberal, and candid declarations of the Noble Lords who had severally delivered their sentiments, and would take care that nothing should fall from him to inflame the passions of their Lordships, or provoke a departure from the sober and becoming tone of argument that had governed the debate. He could not, the Marquis said, entirely coincide with his Noble Friend in respect either to his motion or the arguments with which he had supported it, although he highly applauded his zeal and perseverance in his efforts to facilitate the desirable object of peace. An honourable peace he had always considered as the end of all wars, most anxiously to be wished for, and every rational means should undoubtedly be used to accelerate that end; but he should have been extremely glad if the Noble Earl, who well knew before he made his motion that his sentiments did not concur with going to the extent that he did in his politics, could have been prevailed on not to have brought forward his present proposition, or that some of his friends could even then induce him to withdraw it. No man was more convinced of the goodness of the Noble Earl's intentions, or the purity of his motives on the present occasion; his virtue and honour were too well known to render any part of his political conduct subject to question or suspicion; but if the present motion were withdrawn, he trusted that some other Noble Lord would turn his attention to the same subject, and bring forward a motion with a tendency to peace, so digested and expressed as to be more likely to meet with the general concurrence of the House. The Noble Lords who had spoken had argued the subject fairly and considerately, whether he adverted to the argument of the Noble Earl in the blue ribbon (Lord Carlisle), who had so truly and candidly explained the motion, or the Noble Earl (Lord Scarborough), who had delivered his sentiments in so weighty a manner, or the Noble Lord in his eye (Lord Auckland), who had with great ability expatiated at some length on the true situation of public affairs, the causes that had produced the effects already known, and the consequences that might probably follow, or to the argument of the Noble Earl near him (Lord Mansfield), who had just sat down. He had, the Marquis declared, received infinite satisfaction from so proper and so temperate a disquisition on the state of the country and its concerns. He agreed with what had been said in many points, and particularly in respect to the Noble Earl's motion, which in a moral and abstract sense was undeniably just,

just, but metaphysically it might be distorted to an improper application of it. He could not however give up the principles, which he had stated the other day, but had purposely avoided going into their full extent. Those principles led to peace, and every thing that led to that object was devoutly to be cherished. He must again and again urge his Majesty's ministers to seize the opportunity that offered for making peace; and indeed the principal reason of his rising that day, was to call their Lordships attention to a paper which he had seen in the Leyden Gazette, that had been most inaccurately and perversely translated and given in every one of the London papers—a circumstance the rather to be wondered at, as the true meaning of the words was so plain and obvious, that he who read the original would scarcely suppose it possible to have been mistaken. In that paper the French Convention disclaimed and disavowed, in the most unequivocal and explicit terms, having by any resolution or decree declared, that they would treat only with republics, or such nations as had a republican form of government; on the contrary, they signified their readiness and inclination to treat with any nation, under whatever form of government it might be, and without a desire to interfere with its government. The Marquis said, he wished Great Britain had been the first to have made such a declaration; and he heartily hoped, it would not be the last to make a proper use of it. The paper was ably drawn up, and he could not consider it, but as an important step towards the restoration of tranquillity in Europe. Such an example might surely afford a ground for ministers to do the same, and the sooner soft words and conciliatory language were held by this country the better. God knew, hard words had been dealt in too long, and what effect had they produced? Harsh words on one side had called forth harsh words from the other, and thus they had assisted in generating mutual hatred and inveteracy. The present situation of the country called for conciliation; and though he by no means intended to go into a discussion of the principles of the war, or the conduct of it, he desired ministers to recollect the extraordinary rapidity of events in this extraordinary contest, the quickness with which unpleasant intelligence reached us, the increasing progress of the enemy's conquests, and the little probability of any cessation of their success, as it was matter of certainty that they were determined to make a winter campaign in all quarters. On the subject of making acquisitions, with a view to indemnity, the Marquis said, he coincided perfectly with the Noble Lord (Lord Auckland) who had so truly stated that the true strength  
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of a nation did not depend so much upon its conquests with a view to extension of territory, as to a true regard to what it could hold with safety, and without provoking the envy and jealousy of neighbouring states. His own opinion had been uniform on this subject, but was never better expressed, than it was, when long ago delivered in that House by Queen Elizabeth, who, in one of her speeches from the throne, said to her Parliament, "I too can make conquests and acquisitions, but who can tell me, how I can keep them, or ensure to their inhabitants, that happiness and those blessings which my own subjects enjoy? No, my acquisition is the insular situation of my kingdom."

After having stated this strong point of Queen Elizabeth's sensible speech, his Lordship put the comparison of the value of Martinique set against the loss of Holland; and thence took occasion to point out an error in one of the most correct papers in London, especially in Parliamentary matters (the Morning Chronicle), in which a part of his speech on the first day of the session had been inadvertently misrepresented, but he was sure not intentionally, as much of his argument was accurately given, and most of the points extremely well put. The paper in question had stated him to have said, that Martinique was already lost: He had said no such thing: What he had said was, that the West India Islands were in danger, unless the French had been as neglectful of them, as we had shown ourselves; his chief dependence for their safety rested on the accidental circumstance of Sir Charles Grey's continuing there for their protection. But to complete what he was about to say upon the subject of peace, his opinion was, that if peace could be had for the price of a worn-out island, like Martinique, it would be well worth the purchase.

The Marquis concluded with some general observations, recommending of what he had professed to be his chief object, declaring, that the greatest blessing they could restore to their country, would be an honourable peace; by which happy means, they would avoid all the dissensions, horrors, and discord, that had distracted the kingdom in 1782.

*Earl Stanhope*, in reply, said, he must take some notice of what had fallen from different Noble Lords on the motion, and the arguments which he had taken the liberty of urging in support of it. A Noble Lord near him (Lord Auckland) had admitted, that he knew more of the origin of the war than most of their Lordships; he believed that the Noble Lord not only

knew of the origin of the war, but was, in some measure, answerable for its commencement. That Noble Lord had said, he last year voted against a motion of a Noble Earl (Guildford), but agreed with him in sentiment respecting the subject; he had a fair ground to hope therefore to see him do the reverse, and that he would favour him with his vote in favour of his motion, against which he had spoken. He declared, he could not agree with his Noble Friend, the Noble Marquis, who had said, that all the arguments of the Noble Lords who had spoken that day, were fair and unobjectionable; so far from being of that opinion, he had never heard doctrines more odious and detestable, than he had listened to—[the Marquis of Landowne said gently, *some of them*]. His meaning was, *some of them*. He owned, he was extremely sorry to hear the Noble Earl near him repeat, as a Minister, what he had last session said, as a private Member of Parliament, and persist in his pernicious and unwarrantable doctrine, that it was advisable for this country to promote a civil war in the interior of France. No country, he would ever contend, could have such a right, under any circumstances, but upon pretences flagitious in the highest degree. With regard to what that Noble Earl had said of his argument about assignats last year, and the contrary argument that he had maintained that day, all his wit respecting—

My wound is great, because it is so small,

Then 'twould be greater, were it not at all;

he would, nevertheless, insist on his argument being irresistible, and maintain, that each different price of assignats, at the two different periods, equally served to prove the truth of his reasoning. The Convention had, for wise purposes, taken care to keep them at *par* when they were issued; and, for equally wise purposes, suffered them to depreciate, when it became necessary to take them out of the market. To illustrate this, his Lordship put the case of a dealer in copper, iron, or lead, acting upon the impulse of his interest with respect to his own commodity. If the man or merchant knew his business, he would not overstock the market, because he must be aware that the commodity would sink, would become a drug, and sink in price so low, as to afford him no profit. To avoid such an evil, a cautious copper-merchant would take care to deal out the articles of his warehouse, only in such limited quantities, as to keep up and maintain their value; and when the market price was at the highest, let some more come by little and little into the market. So with the assignats, it was evident that the French Convention had acted wisely and warily, with a perfect prudence and proper regard to causes and effects. With respect

to the decree of the Convention of the 19th of November, which had been so much insisted on, and, by the industry of ministers, had been so loudly noised in the ears of the Public; in fact, no such decree had ever passed. [*A strong expression of surprise from their Lordships in general.*] He repeated it, that no such decree had ever passed; and he was amazed that their Lordships, who had such better means of information within their reach, should, as it were by common consent, fall into and adopt the vulgar error. Literally speaking, the decree so much complained of had never passed; but he would tell their Lordships what did pass: The French Government had published a paper and proclamation, to the purport of the matter erroneously termed a decree of the Convention, and that paper or document was addressed *A tout le Peuple*, which was ignorantly translated, by those employed by English printers to make versions from the French, *To all People*. The Noble Earl behind him (Earl Mansfield) understood French pretty well, and was familiar with the French language and idiom; he might therefore, he was sure, with safety appeal to that Noble Earl, whether he was not correct in saying, that the true translation of, *A tout le Peuple* was not, *To all People*, but *To all Nations*, which clearly implied a very opposite meaning from that which had been put on what was called the decree of the 19th of November 1792; though, in fact, such a decree had never passed. The false translation made all the difference; and thence so gross a mistake, and so much false reasoning upon it, as had obtained in the face of the Public, and to the delusion of the people of this country. His Lordship insisted upon it, that no good objection had been brought forward against his motion; and as to what a Noble Earl had said of the thirty years war in Germany, the history of which he had been advised to read, although it filled *eighty* large volumes in folio [corrected by Lord Mansfield, *eight* volumes]; it was because he did not wish for another thirty years war, he was anxious for their Lordships to adopt the proposition which he had submitted to them. Many Noble Lords, he observed, had argued his motion on the grounds of policy and expediency; they had chosen to forget, that he had expressly rested it solely on grounds of justice and propriety, declaring most explicitly, that he put policy and expediency out of the question: On the strong grounds on which he had placed it, he would leave it; and so little did he think of the arguments urged in debate against it, and so willing was he to take advantage of the steersman's call of "Steady! steady!" to the seamen on board a ship in a storm in its passage from Holland, mentioned on a former evening by a Noble Lord, that he would

make that call his maxim, "Steady! steady!" should govern the compass of his course; and therefore he was determined to divide the House on the occasion, if he was sure to stand alone upon the division.

*The Duke of Bedford* said, the Noble Earl had shewn him his motion before he made it, and he had hoped he should have been able to vote for it; but on its being debated, he found it expressed in such general terms, that it was liable to great doubt and misapplication; and the Noble Earl had carried his argument upon it so far, that he could not coincide with him in his reasoning, nor vote for his motion. He admitted, however, its principle, which was truly important; he was therefore extremely anxious to have it fairly and fully discussed, whenever it should be stated in clear, direct, and unambiguous terms, so as to render it worthy their Lordships deliberate consideration. Peace, it was clear, became more necessary in the view of all men, either to be negotiated, or at least that the French should understand that we were not adverse to such a negotiation. On that ground, he gave notice that he should take the liberty of bringing forward a motion on the subject on that day fortnight (Tuesday, January 20), and therefore moved, that the Lords be summoned.

The House divided on the question,

<i>Contents</i>	—	1
<i>Not Contents</i>	—	61
		—
<i>Majority</i>	—	60

On the question being put, on the Lord Chancellor's declaration that the *Not Contents* had it, Earl Stanhope said, "The *Contents* have it;" when a division ensued,

<i>Not Contents</i>	—	61
<i>Contents</i>	—	1
		—
<i>Majority</i>	—	60

## P R O T E S T.

*House of Lords, Tuesday, January 6, 1795.*

The order of the day being read, Earl Stanhope moved,

"Resolved, That this country ought not, and will not interfere in the internal affairs of France; and that it is expedient, explicitly to declare the same."



A debate ensued, and it was moved, "That this House do now adjourn;" which being objected to, after a further debate, the same was resolved in the affirmative.

Whereupon the Noble Earl entered the following

### PROTEST.

"**DISSENTIENT.**—1st. Because the motion made for the House to adjourn, was professedly intended to get rid of the following resolution, viz. Resolved, &c. (See above.)

" 2dly. Because I hold, that it is contrary to equity and justice, for any foreign country to interfere in the internal affairs or constitution of the French Republic, or any other independent nation.

" 3dly. Because the Government of Great Britain (not having been elected by the Citizens of France) can have no more right to give to France a monarchical, aristocratical, or other form of government whatever, than the crowned despots of Prussia and Russia had to overturn the constitution of, now, unhappy Poland.

" 4thly. Because I highly disapprove and reprobate the doctrine, advanced by ministers in the debate; namely, "That to restore the ancient and hereditary monarchy of France, no expence should be spared." And I reprobate that pernicious and uncivic doctrine, the more strongly from its not having been suddenly, hastily, or inconsiderately started; but, from its having been taken up (as it was solemnly declared) upon the utmost deliberation.

" 5thly. Because I deem it to be an injustice committed by ministers towards my fellow-citizens, to adopt a principle which shall render it necessary for the Government of Great Britain to lay further heavy burdens upon the people; and to tax their houses, their windows, their beer, their candles, their shoes, and many other conveniences and necessities of life, in order to provide a fund, to attempt the accomplishment of such a wicked purpose as aforesaid.

" 6thly. Because the proposed resolution, above stated, was intended by me as a "*solemn pledge*," that the Government of this nation would not interfere in the internal affairs of France: But the refusal of the House to give such a pledge, tends to shut the door to peace; and consequently tends to ensure the ruin of this manufacturing, commercial, and once happy country: Particularly considering the increased, and rapidly increasing strength of the navy of the French Republic; independently of the prospect there is, of their having the navies of Holland and Spain under their immediate influence.

" 7thly.

" 7thly. Because the public funds, the paper currency, and the public and private credit of this country, will probably be unequal to stand against the tremendous shock to which the ministers will now expose them.

" 8thly. Because I think that frankness, fairness, humanity, and the principles of honesty and of justice, are always in the end the best policy. And I believe it to be true in regard to nations (as well as with respect to individuals) that, "nothing that is not just can be wise, or likely to be ultimately prosperous."

" 9thly. Because I lament the more, that the House should refuse to disclaim the interfering in the internal constitution of France, in as much, as by the new constitution of the French Republic one and indivisible, adopted by the present National Convention, on the 23d day of June, in the year 1793, and under the title "Of the Relation of the French Republic with foreign Nations," and by the articles 118th and 119th of that constitution, it is declared and enacted that,

' The French people is the friend and natural ally of every  
' FREE nation. It does not interfere with the government  
' of other nations. It does not suffer that other nations  
' should interfere with its own.'

" So frank, so fair, and so explicit a declaration on their part, did, in my opinion, intitle them to a better species of return.

" 10thly. Because I conceive that a true republican form of government, being firmly established in France, is much more safe to the liberties of the people of Great Britain, than the tyrannical, capricious, perfidious, secret, intriguing, and restless, ancient monarchy of France, or than any other monarchy they could there establish: But, even if I were of a direct opposite way of thinking, I would not be guilty of the gross injustice of attempting to force a monarchy upon them contrary to their inclination.

" 11thly. Because I think that no war ought to be continued, that can by a proper line of moderation be avoided; and the more especially with respect to the French people, who by their republican exertions, republican enthusiasm, and republican courage, have made victory the almost constant 'order of the day.'

" 12thly. Because the continuance of such a bloody contest without necessity, appears to be a profane tempting of DIVINE PROVIDENCE, in whose benign and almighty hands the fate of battles and of empires is placed.

" 13thly. Because I wish to wash my hands entirely of the innocent blood that may be shed in this war with France; of all

*Mr. Lambton* moved,

"That an humble Address be presented to his Majesty, that he will be graciously pleased to give directions, that there be laid before this House an account of such of the troops of the Elector of *Hanover*, of the Landgrave of *Hesse Cassel*, of the Margrave of *Baden*, and of the Landgrave of *Hesse Darmstadt*, as have been killed, or have died, in *British* pay since the commencement of our treaty with those respective powers."

He said that his reason for making these motions, was in order to shew the Public, the extraordinary expence with which the present scale of operations was attended to the country. If these returns were laid before the House, the unexampled extravagance of the present war would be made manifest to the House. It was a notorious fact, that we paid nearly thirty pounds per man, for every one of those subsidiary troops, that was either killed, or died, while in our service. This circumstance rendered our expences almost incalculable. In one single action, in which Marshal Freytag (who commanded the covering army at the siege of Dunkirk) was defeated, there were three thousand five hundred Hanoverians killed. Here was an expence incurred by this country, of near one hundred thousand pounds in a day: And, great as that number was, he was convinced that a much greater number of mercenary troops had fallen in the various actions which took place in the last campaign. These circumstances appeared to him to be of such importance, as to call for the peculiar attention of the House; and it was with that impression that he made the motion which he had just stated to the House.

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, he had no objection that the returns, which had been moved for, should be produced. He would only remark that the Hon. Gentleman was a little mistaken with respect to the sum which he had mentioned. But surely in an extended scale of operations, such as the present war required, a sum of a hundred thousand pounds, given by the country, in order to defray the expence of replacing the troops, who had fallen, was a consideration which could no-ways go to affect the general reasoning on the subject.

*Mr. Lambton* said, his information might perhaps be rather inaccurate, but that would appear when the returns were laid before the House.

*Mr. Lambton's* motion was then put, and agreed to.

*Colonel Maitland* moved,

"That an humble Address be presented to his Majesty, that he will be graciously pleased to give directions that there be laid before the House an account of men lost, killed, wounded, missing, and prisoners, of the *British* troops, since the last campaign, distinguishing each corps and service."—Agreed to.

PRUSSIAN

## PRUSSIAN SUBSIDY.

*Mr. Jekyl* said, that on a former night he had put a question to the minister, with respect to the amount of the money paid to the King of Prussia, and had received an answer that it amounted to 1,200,000*l.* He intended to have followed it with a motion with respect to the number of troops employed by the King of Prussia, in consequence of his treaty with this country; but was answered, that there were no official accounts on that particular head. Since then, upon looking into the treaty, he found, from the 7th article, that there were two commissioners to be appointed, one by the Dutch, and one by this country, in order to see that the stipulations were properly fulfilled on the part of his Prussian Majesty. The Right Hon. Gentleman would certainly have no objection to inform the House who was the commissioner for this country.—It would then appear whether he had discharged his duty, in making a proper return, or had been guilty of a neglect in his public capacity. If he had no return to make, the case would certainly be altered. The other night the Right Hon. Gentleman had stated, that he had a sort of general knowledge of the co-operation of the troops of his Prussian Majesty, which had been of essential service to the common cause.—This he must either have had from hearsay, which could not be argued from; or from the communications of the commissioner. He meant to inquire, whether he could not contrive to communicate this general sort of knowledge to the House, by giving extracts from the written correspondence of the commissioner of such parts, which, though material to the point he had stated, might be blended with other matters that it might not be proper to communicate; and therefore he only wished for such extracts as the Right Hon. Gentleman might deem expedient to produce, so that the Public might be satisfied that their money had been properly applied, and that the King of Prussia had duly fulfilled his share of the treaty.

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that he would much rather that the Hon. Gentleman would put his proposition into the form of a specific motion. If the Hon. Gentleman meant that the Prussian troops had immediately co-operated with the British army on the continent, they certainly had not; but they were employed on the frontiers of France, and so far in a way useful to the purposes of the war. Government were in possession of a certain degree of information; and perhaps the most proper way in which the Hon. Gentleman could put his motion would be, to apply for the best information which they could give on the subject.

*Mr. Jekyl.* "Was there, or was there not, a commissioner from this country?"

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer.* "There was a Noble Lord who was near the person of his Prussian Majesty, though not in the capacity of a commissioner."

*Mr. Jekyl* then moved for such official documents, letters, and extracts, as related to the active co-operation of his Prussian Majesty, in pursuance of the terms of the treaty.

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* objected to this motion, as relating not to the amount of the troops, but to the mode of operation; one of those circumstances which it would not be proper to communicate. After some conversation, the motion was withdrawn.

*Colonel Maitland* remarked, that in his motion for the return of the loss of British troops, he had omitted those taken prisoners. It was therefore to be understood, that the motion was exactly the same as had been made last year.

*Mr. Jekyl* then moved,

"That an humble Address be presented to his Majesty, that he will be graciously pleased to give directions that there be laid before this House an account of the troops employed by the King of Prussia, in pursuance of the treaty signed at the Hague, in April 1794, as far as the same can be ascertained."

*Mr. Sheridan* asked, whether there was any objection to lay before the House the correspondence of Lord Malmesbury, in order to ascertain the most material point, whether the King of Prussia had kept faith with this country? Now that ministers proposed to give an immense sum to the Emperor, to induce him to continue his co-operation in the war, it was of consequence to see how far experience would warrant our reliance on the fidelity of continental alliances, and the punctuality with which the German Princes fulfilled their engagements. The minister might say that the King of Prussia had forty or fifty thousand men on the frontiers, but were these employed for the purposes which the treaty stipulated?—It might appear from the correspondence of Lord Malmesbury, that he had remonstrated with the King of Prussia on the circumstance of having neglected to fulfil his engagements, and called upon him to make good his faith to this country. He therefore moved for such parts of his correspondence as might be communicated with safety and propriety.

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, he had much rather that the subject should be brought forward for a separate discussion, than that the important business of the day should be interrupted, which Gentlemen on the other side had expressed so much eagerness to bring forward.

*The*

*The Speaker* stated to Mr. Sheridan, that his motion was pretty much of the same nature with that which had already been withdrawn, and would therefore come forward with more propriety on another day.

*Mr. Sheridan* therefore pressed his motion no farther.

#### COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY.

The House then resolved itself into a Committee of Supply, *Mr. Hobart* in the chair.

*Admiral Gardner* moved, That the number of 100,000 seamen, including 15,000 marines, be voted to his Majesty for the service of the year 1795.

*Mr. Morris Robinson* said, that the Hon. Gentleman who moved the address had varied from the courtly style usually adopted upon such occasions, and called upon Gentlemen to speak out their minds. This was certainly a period which of all others demanded the exercise of that privilege. He should consider the country as greatly wanting to itself, if it did not avail itself of its navy, and give to it its full strength. A neglect of the navy he should consider as the greatest grievance under which the country could labour from the misconduct of Administration. He here complained of what he understood to be a capital defect in the construction of our ships, namely, that in point of speed in sailing they were inferior to the French. This was a defect productive of much inconvenience and mischief, and called loudly for a remedy. If he wished to give a foreigner an idea of the strength, and magnificence, and the glory of the country, he would carry him, not to Somerset-house, but to our docks.

*Captain Berkeley* rose, as an officer in the navy, to give his opinion upon the subject introduced by the Hon. Gentleman respecting the inequality of sailing that subsisted between the English and French ships. He partly agreed, and partly differed with him. He allowed that the French ships were built upon a preferable construction, but he maintained that in general the French ships did not sail faster than the English. An instance occurred in confirmation of what he advanced in the year 1793, when the English fleet chased six sail of French ships, and though they were the fastest sailing ships in the French navy, our fleet gained considerably upon them, and Admiral Pailley at one time even got up with them. He conceived also, that this was not the moment for instituting an inquiry into the subject, and that in time of peace it would be entered into with greater propriety. He would, however, throw out an idea which occurred to him upon the subject, that he certainly thought that the construction of our ships

might be improved by consulting with men whose minds are expanded by science, and to encourage them to exertions by proposing medals and premiums to those who should offer the best models. Whenever the subject was brought forward by the landed Gentlemen in that House, he, and the other Members in the naval profession, would, he was confident, be happy to lend their assistance. He remarked, that though the French models were better than ours, still our workmanship was superior, and he trusted when they should be called forth, we should be found to have better hands, as well as better heads, than the French. He could not help taking notice of some reflections that had been thrown out by a Right Hon. Gentleman on a former night against the late First Lord of the Admiralty. He was a Nobleman of the most amiable character, to whom he was himself under the highest obligations, and he should deem himself the most ungrateful of men, if he were capable to hear, without indignation, any charge brought against him. The many captures made by the enemy, of our merchant-ships, had been laid to the charge of that Noble Lord; but before Gentlemen made such an accusation, they ought to inquire what number of the ships so taken were under convoy; because if the owners of ships so taken chose to run the risk of sending them without waiting for a convoy, for the sake of a market, it was impossible for the First Lord of the Admiralty to prevent it. He understood that some blame had been imputed to the Noble Lord, because the English fleet was not equal to the French on the first of June. He wished to correct Gentlemen upon that point. The fleet with which Earl Howe sailed upon that occasion, was much superior to that of the French, until the detachment made to convoy the East-India fleet. To that detachment, in his opinion, the victory afterwards obtained might be attributed; for if we had retained our superiority, the French would never have hazarded an engagement with us. He averred, he had never seen a fleet more completely equipped put to sea; and that every thing which belonged to the Admiralty department, was attended to with the utmost care and attention.

*Mr. Robinson* reprobated with much warmth the treatment which he had met with on a former night from the ministers, when he wished to put some queries relative to the state of the navy, and they had attempted to crush him by the united force of their eloquence and overbearing influence.

*Mr. Francis* said, that the Hon. Gentleman (*Capt. Berkeley*) had spoke with great candour as to the defects in the construction of our ships. He reprobated, however, the distinction

distinction which he had made, when he talked of the landed Gentlemen in that House as the most proper persons to bring forward questions relative to the state of the navy, as highly unparliamentary. If any such distinction was to be taken, the mercantile representatives were surely more interested in every thing connected with that subject. He thought a time of war the most fit for attending to the improvement of the construction of all ships that might be built for the service. The Hon. Gentleman had talked of his very great obligations to the late First Lord of the Admiralty: Other officers, who perhaps had not received the same obligations, did not talk of him so favourably. But, if he was so well qualified for the situation as the Hon. Gentleman had represented him to be, it was very strange, that, after having for some time filled that office, he had been turned out, in order to make room for another, who had yet his 'prenticeship to serve.

*Admiral Gardner* said, that from what had been stated, it might have been supposed that it was the duty of the Lords of the Admiralty to attend to the construction of the ships, whereas this part of the business belonged to the navy surveyors. He differed in one respect with his Hon. Friend (*Captain Berkeley*). From what he had seen of the French ships, he was prepared to admit that they sailed faster than ours. It was certainly the fact, that, from the mode which they adopted, they were much better constructed. When a ship was to be built of a certain rate, premiums were offered for the best model; these were submitted to the Academy of Sciences, and the model which was judged to be the most complete was adopted. Since he had been in the navy, which was now within a month of forty years, we had greatly improved in the construction of our ships, in consequence of the French prizes which we had taken; and he had no doubt we should continue to improve from the same circumstance. If we wished to improve the construction of ships still further, we should do well to imitate the French practice, in holding out a premium for the best models. Respecting the fleet which sailed in the month of March, a finer fleet, in his opinion, never put to sea; and certainly the First Lord of the Admiralty was not to blame for the detachment which was wisely and necessarily made from it. He concluded with a panegyric on the diligence of the late First Lord of the Admiralty. That Noble Lord had made it his study to do his duty; and, from an acquaintance with him for five years, he would take upon him to say, that no man was better informed with respect to what related to his office. Nothing, he was assured, would



would give the Noble Lord greater pleasure than an inquiry into his public conduct.

*Mr. Fox* stated, that he had been accused of having made an attack upon the character of the Noble Lord lately at the head of the Admiralty. He had no such intention; he had indeed said, that his public conduct was not such as appeared to him to deserve approbation, but without the smallest feeling of personal disrespect. He had last session stated grounds for an inquiry into the conduct of the Noble Lord; he had not lately made so minute an inquiry into particulars as he did upon that occasion, but he was prepared to state the general result, that the captures of last year exceeded the number of ships taken within a similar space in any former war, and exceeded also the proportion of the increase of our commerce. It appeared to him that the navy ought to have been increased more in the present war than in any former period. But he was told, that from the increase of our commerce, we might expect a greater number of ships to be taken. If our commerce was increased, it afforded also the means of increasing our navy, and thereby providing an additional degree of security. Though our navy, he confessed, was large and respectable, still it was by no means what it ought to have been. At the commencement of the war, the French navy was weak, and it must certainly appear, from the result of the naval operations, that our navy has not had that effect upon the decision of the contest which it ought to have had, from its great superiority to that of the enemy. An Hon. Gentleman had said, that they had been lavish in their praises of the victory of the 1st of June; they had only been just. No man would accuse him, *Mr. Fox* said, with wishing to detract from the glory of that action; still, however, prudence should have dictated, that the English should at least have been equal to the French. The French had at present in Toulon a fleet of fifteen sail, and it was a question whether it might not be equal to our fleet in the Mediterranean, which, from its long absence, must now be considerably deficient in force and the number of its men, and he was sorry to add, with respect to British seamen, in discipline. He was told the Noble Lord (*Chatham*) had been injured; if so, he must have been injured by his own friends, by those who had put him out of office. He lamented that our naval exertions had been obstructed by an ostentatious display of zeal in the land service. Upwards of 20l. he understood, had been given for a man; a circumstance which had greatly injured the recruiting for the navy, and which the country might

might afterwards have occasion to rue. It was the true policy of this country to encourage as many landmen as possible to enter into the sea service. When he heard talk of an invasion, an event which he had not been accustomed to regard with great apprehension, he must own that he should feel much more secure from a certain superiority at sea, than from any number of land forces. When to all the disasters we had experienced at sea, he added the glaring deficiency of intelligence, which had appeared in so many instances, he must own, that he could not give the Noble Person, lately at the head of the Admiralty, credit for all the diligence that had been ascribed to him. He always understood that the French ships sailed faster than ours; in this idea he was confirmed by what had fallen from the gallant Admiral. He had learned both from him and from the Hon. Captain, that we owed to French models the improvements in the construction of our ships. We were indebted to both of the gallant officers for bringing French prizes into our ports, and so enabling us to improve by the superior ingenuity of the enemy. But it surely was not very honourable to the diligence of the minister, or very flattering to the science, industry, and glory of the country, to be obliged to improve by others, and to be content always to imitate. He was told that it did not belong to the Admiralty to attend to the construction of ships. He did not care to whom it belonged; he had a right to expect attention to this particular from the Executive Government. He always understood that the Admiralty had the superintending power with respect to whatever related to the navy. He was entitled to ask them, Why measures had not been taken sooner to improve the construction of our ships? The time of war was urged as an argument why these measures could not be taken at present—the very circumstance which in his mind weighed most powerfully that they should be adopted without loss of time. He was told that no improvement could be introduced with respect to ships already built, or that were now upon the stocks; but he should deem it a most criminal neglect, if care was not taken to set on foot the building of new ships upon the improved construction, in every dock in the kingdom, and indeed wherever it was possible; and this, he trusted, would be the first measure of the new Board of Admiralty. To all that he had stated, he had heard no other answer than what had been urged last year, an enumeration of the ships we had taken, including those we had got by capitulation at Toulon. But it was not a pleasing circumstance, that one of our own ships of the line had fallen into the hands of the enemy, a circumstance which had not often happened in former wars to this country; only one

one had been taken during the whole course of the American war, when we had to contend against the combined naval force of Europe, and that had been retaken. With respect to the Admiralty itself, the character of the Noble Lord has been more injured by his colleagues than by any other person. It has been said, that nothing would be more pleasing to that Noble Lord, than to have an inquiry instituted with respect to his public conduct. A general wish of that sort has so often been expressed, and the particular proposition, when brought forward, defeated by some particular consideration, that much stress will not now be laid on such a declaration. If the Noble Lord was indeed the able and diligent character he has been held out, it can only be said, that he has had the most injurious colleagues, and served the most ungrateful Public, since the former must have consented to remove him from a situation which he occupied with so much credit, and perhaps no change was ever so generally approved by the latter. Mr. Fox concluded with declaring, that the navy of England was of more importance now, than at any former period. The whole of the campaign ought to teach ministers the inefficacy of military operations. He had been told that there were ships ready to be sent to sea, if sailors could be got to man them. He trusted that this was not the fact, and that steps would be taken immediately to procure more ships and more men for the service; and that no diminution of the military force would be considered as too great a sacrifice, in order to extend the scale of our naval exertions.

*Mr. Secretary Dundas* said, he would not trouble the House with many words. With regard to the observations of the Hon. Gentleman (*Mr. Robinson*), relative to the right of every Member to call for information from the servants of the Crown, he fully admitted that right, and was far from being desirous of endeavouring to prevent it. Allusions had been made to the duty of the Navy Office, and as he held a respectable situation in that Office, he trusted the House would excuse him for what he was about to say, when they reflected how necessary it was to prevent the effect which insinuations might otherwise produce. With regard to what had been said by the Right Hon. Gentleman on the opposite side of the House, on the necessity of doing every thing that could possibly be done to improve our navy, he was ready to subscribe to every word of it; but he would be bold enough to say, that there had not been the least negligence in that respect. To shew that he was warranted in this assertion, he begged leave to call the attention of the Committee to the situation of this country at the commencement of the war; which had yet been of only two years duration. We  
began

began with only sixteen thousand men; last year we had eighty-five thousand seamen; and we had at present on board of our ships of war, no less than ninety-five thousand men—this was the exertion of Government in the department of the navy, in the space of two years: Under such circumstances he would venture to say, that such exertion had not been exceeded at any time in this country.

With regard to what the Right Hon. Gentleman had said, that he did not mean to attack the private character of the First Lord of the Admiralty, Mr. Dundas said, he readily admitted that, and sincerely believed it was but justice to that Right Hon. Gentleman to declare, he understood him to speak of the First Lord of the Admiralty only as a public man, and in that view too he would venture to say, that it was impossible to state one fact to the disadvantage of that Noble Lord: He would defy any man breathing to say there had been a fault in any one part of the naval exertions of this country, that could fairly be imputed to the Noble Earl. But this was not all; for instead of there having been no fault, there was uncommon merit in our naval exertions. The Committee would recollect that in the prosecution of former wars, it had been customary to ransack almost every merchant-ship for all its sailors, and to proceed on such a scale as, for a time, almost entirely to destroy our trade. At that moment he would take the liberty of saying, that notwithstanding the astonishing exertions which had been made to increase our naval force, our trade remained almost entire: Let it not, therefore, be said, that there had been any want of exertion on the part of the Noble Lord who had been the First Lord of the Admiralty. There was another thing to be considered, which tended to prove the merit of our naval exertions; he would ask the Committee to recollect the nature of the difficulties which we had to struggle with in procuring men for the navy in the present war; they all knew there was a great ardour in the Public for the success of the cause in which we were engaged; and he was ready to confess, there were none who partook more of that ardour than our sailors; but it must be allowed also, that a great and powerful stimulus to entering into the naval service, and which operated in other wars, did not exist in this, he meant the love of prize-money; in almost every former war the English sailor had been encouraged to enter, supported, after he had entered, by the hope of returning to his wife and mistress with a load of wealth, and, under that idea, the wife or mistress had often consented to his adventure. In the present war, there was no such cause to operate; to look after a prize from the French at sea, was like looking for a pin in a hay-stack.

He agreed with the Right Hon. Gentleman, that there had been an interference with the manning of the navy, by recruiting for the land service ; but if the manner in which the service of the army had been supported was an improper one, he was ready to take his share of the responsibility which ought to be attached to it ; if there was a crime imputable on that head, he was ready to plead guilty to that crime ; be that as it might, it could not be considered as any fault of the First Lord of the Admiralty. It might be made a channel for attacking the conduct of the Executive Government generally, and if it should, he would be ready to defend it ; but it could not be brought as a complaint against those who had the immediate care of our naval exertions.

What was the nature of our situation with regard to our fleet at this moment ? It had been insinuated, that we had many ships which we could not man, and that we were at a loss to man them. God forbid we should be in such a situation ! Mr. Dundas said, he would not then, for reasons which must be obvious, detail all the circumstances in that respect ; if he were to do so, he was confident the House would be astonished, as well as pleased, at finding the situation of our fleet at this time, and the force which we had ready for the moment we should chuse to employ them : Having said this, and believing, as he did, that our naval force was at present double that of the most exaggerated account of the naval force of the enemy—he was, nevertheless, ready to admit, that the naval exertions of the enemy were such as to arouse his alarm, but God forbid they should create our fear. Let Gentlemen see how we stood:—We had in our naval service near ninety thousand men, and in that number by no means the proportion of landmen which the nature of the service was capable of admitting ; therefore we might spread them much wider over our fleet, and supply by landmen the number of sailors taken out of the ships to which they belonged ; and, in this situation, the Committee were that day called upon to add fifteen thousand seamen to the naval force. He looked upon this as the most prosperous situation the country could be in with respect to our seamen ; for he believed that one hundred thousand men had never before been, at one time, in the naval service of this country. Whatever measure might hereafter be necessary for the continuance of the naval superiority of this country, he trusted it would be adopted ; whatever difference some points in politics might create in that House, he had the satisfaction to be confident, that there was but one sentiment in it as to the necessity of supporting the navy ; he feared, however, that the further augmentation could not be made in the same

manner

manner as the force that had been already raised; because, as he had already observed, sailors had not the same inducements to enter into this, as they had to enter into other wars. But, he flattered himself, the past exertions would answer all the purposes which the people of this country could desire.

Mr. Dundas declared he meant to have said something on a point which had escaped him, *viz.* the construction of our ships. He believed there was some truth in the assertion that our ships, in point of construction, might be inferior to the enemy, but he had no doubt, that in every thing which related to the workmanship we were much superior; and however paradoxical the thing might seem, he would assign as one reason for the superiority of the French ships in point of construction, it was the general and received opinion of the superiority of our naval force. We had always an idea that we could sink the French ships by fighting, and he would dare to say, that if the gallant Admiral who had spoken that night, who sat so much at his ease then in the House, and who had admitted the superiority of the construction of the French ships, was to meet one of them, he would, notwithstanding her superiority, undertake to blow her out of the water, if she attempted to engage with him. There was another reason for this superiority in point of construction on the part of the French; it was the hatred with which, in this country, a projector was held. The moment a man, however ingenious he might be, said he had any project, he was almost always treated as a madman: In consequence of this prejudice, we sometimes lost sight of our interest; for, although but few projects would answer to the sanguine hopes of their projectors, yet many might have merit to a certain extent: He therefore declared he should, at all times, be ready to receive any suggestions that might be given him, and to co-operate with their authors, if he saw any prospect of an improvement to our naval architecture.

He concluded with declaring, that our victories proved that our ships, however comparatively inferior to the French, were their superiors in action; and that, from the present very respectable state of our navy, there was not, on that point, any ground for despondency.

Mr. Sheridan said, he certainly agreed with the Right Hon. Gentleman who spoke last, that there was hardly any difference of opinion in the Committee as to the propriety of supporting our naval superiority; but it was from an apprehension that no substantial good to the country would arise from what had been said that night, unless ministers were spurred on, that he should trouble the Committee on this subject. He was

the mere of that opinion, when he observed the manner in which the Right Hon. Gentleman, who had just sat down, had conveyed his sentiments. He had said, that one of the reasons for the superiority of the enemy in the construction of their ships, arose from the contempt in which projectors were held in this country; if that was the case, he was afraid the matter would be neglected; for the Rt. Hon. Gentleman, at the time he admitted the superiority of the enemy in one respect, and the defectiveness of the construction of our ships; conveyed an idea that he thought our ships altogether as good as they need be, and this when he knew it was not the opinion of the best naval officers in this country. The Right Hon. Gentleman had observed, that if the gallant Admiral were to meet one of the ships of the enemy, he would undertake to blow it out of the water. Mr. Sheridan said, he had no doubt of the courage or the skill of that great naval officer; on the contrary, he concurred heartily in the praise which had been so justly bestowed upon him; but when we talked of blowing the enemy out of the water, there was one thing to be done first, namely, to catch them; which we were not very likely to do while they could sail faster than us, and which it was now admitted they were able to do.

Mr. Sheridan said, he was sorry to see any disposition to treat this matter lightly, and he wished they might hear of some measure being taken in consequence of what had passed that day, although he confessed he had no very flattering hope of any great good being done. It had been said by an Hon. Member (Captain Berkeley), that single ships of the enemy sailed better than ours; but that they did not sail better in a body; he did not pretend to have much knowledge of sailing, but, as a fleet could not be formed but by a collection of single ships, he did not see how the distinction could be supported by fair reasoning.

A great deal had been said as to the character of the late First Lord of the Admiralty; some had expressed indignation that any doubt should have been expressed of the adequate abilities of the Noble Lord; others had said that he was an amiable character. To the first he would answer, that he cared for the indignation of no man, when he was doing what appeared to him to be his duty to the Public, and speaking perhaps the voice of the Public. To the second he would say, that it was not an amiable First Lord of the Admiralty we wanted, but it was an attentive, active, and vigilant First Lord of the Admiralty; and if this was the character of the Noble Lord, he had been most ungratefully treated by the Public, and shamefully deserted by his colleagues; and, in that

that supposition, the best thing the House could do was to address his Majesty to dismiss from his councils those who had advised him to turn out of so important an office, a Nobleman so well qualified to fill it, and to place in his stead another, who, whatever his talents might be, must go through an apprenticeship in the service.

He agreed with the Right Hon. Gentleman who spoke last in one thing, that nothing was to be got by this war; that was what we all knew, and of which he needed not to have reminded us; but when he told the House the difficulties we had in manning our navy, and the credit he took to Government for having succeeded, he ought also to have reminded the Committee or another circumstance, which tended to facilitate our manning the navy,—he meant that of our having no privateers.

With regard to the vote, Mr. Sheridan said, he was so far from objecting to it on account of its being too large, that he thought it hardly large enough; and, in considering this, they were not to regard, as the Right Hon. Gentleman had done, what force we had in former wars, but what was the strength of the enemy in this; and, upon that view, he was fearful the vote now proposed was too small; however, he should be ready to concur in any vote that might be necessary hereafter, in support of our navy, because we depended entirely on the navy in this war. He hinted also, that there might be some improvement in the marines.

He proceeded to observe, that he had some reason to exult, when he recollected what he had said, at the time of his giving certain information to the House, and when he recollected how he had been answered by the Right Hon. Gentlemen on the other side. He had made an assertion, with regard to the situation of Halifax last year, that was flatly denied by the Secretary of State; it turned out, however, that he (Mr. Sheridan) was right. He had read a paper, which he said was the speech of Lord Dorchester to the Indians of North America; the Secretary of State called it a forgery, but it turned out to be authentic. He had alleged, the other night, that a company of merchants had agreed to invite his Majesty's ministers, but that Lord Chatham was expressly excluded;—and the reason alleged for that mark of disrespect was, that he had not taken care to protect the trade and commerce of this country. The Chancellor of the Exchequer seemed to dissent from that assertion: He wished the Right Hon. Gentleman would inform the Committee now, whether the assertion was true or false. These things he mentioned, merely because he challenged inquiry into every thing he said in that House.

*The*



*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that, as far as an omission to invite the First Lord of the Admiralty to dinner could affect the political character of the Noble Lord, the observation of the Hon. Gentleman was true; but that omission was not a marked one, for four of his Majesty's Cabinet happened to be in the same situation.

He said further, "I have no desire to say any thing in vindication of the late First Lord of the Admiralty; because, however near and dear such a character must always be to me, any observation on my part would rather tend to weaken than to strengthen the just statement and honourable panegyric of my Right Hon. Friend (Mr. Dundas)."

"I acknowledge, that the late exertions of the enemy have been extraordinary indeed: But do these exertions prove that they will be of long duration? No! They only prove that they are rapidly approaching towards a state of imbecility—that their resources will be soon exhausted. They are the consequences of unparalleled pressure and unprecedented violence. Can any man for a moment believe, that those exertions, founded on artificial finance, and barbarous extortion, will continue to operate with that vigour and effect which a just cause and a permanent system are calculated to enforce? From our system of warfare, we may expect success; that of the French contains in itself the seeds of dissolution."

The Chancellor of the Exchequer then assigned a few reasons for thinking that the vote proposed to the Committee was sufficient for continuing our superiority to the enemy in naval strength.

*Admiral Gardner* vindicated the Admiralty. He thought the inattention attributed to the Board was ill-founded. For the last four or five months he had been employed at sea, therefore it could not be supposed that he was sufficiently acquainted with all its transactions at home in his absence.

To the charges, however, made against them respecting the French fleet, which had annoyed our coasts and captured some of our vessels, he could, without fear of contradiction, affirm, that the Lords of the Admiralty, on that occasion, deserved more praise than censure; because they were no sooner apprised of the facts, than they dispatched a squadron under the command of Admiral Harvey superior to that of the enemy, and sent four ships after them, to counteract the intentions of the enemy; which exertion, he was happy to say, had its wished-for effect.

*General Tarleton* thought the present an improper time for levity on the part of the ministry, who had involved this country in its present deplorable state. The subject of discussion

was

was one of the most important that had ever engaged the House. Admitting all the praise which the gallantry of our officers and seamen deserved for their manly exertions on the glorious first of June, the Board of Admiralty had not yet acquired, on their part, a triumph. If we were anxious for the effects of their wonderful exertions and official capacity, we might be amply satisfied by the mercantile losses recorded in Lloyd's List, which numerous and lamentable catalogue was attributable only to the supineness of the Lords of the Admiralty. His astonishment, however, was not excited by these facts; because his Majesty's ministers had rendered themselves notorious for a total ignorance of all maritime intelligence. The Right Hon. Treasurer of the Navy might, in the moments of jocularitv, affect a joy, that, in the prosecution of this war, neither wife nor mistress lamented the absence of a husband or a lover; but the General confessed, that his mind was occupied with ideas more solemn, more solid, and, he trusted, more beneficial to his country.

The exertions of the French, in the present struggle, were unbounded. Not satisfied with vanquishing their active opponents, they endeavoured to conciliate the affections of their fallen foes. Ever since the death of Robespierre, all restraint, all guard, had been withdrawn from the British officers and seamen who became prisoners; and he was afraid, notwithstanding the virtue and patriotism of these men, who had stood forward gallantly in the cause of their King and Country, that many of them would be tempted to enter into the French service: Nay, that some had already, in conjunction with American sailors, actually done so. The General, after recommending a farther augmentation of the seamen for the service of the year, concluded with ridiculing the acquisition of Corsica, which had been so much boasted of by ministry, and which acquisition would never indemnify us for the sacrifice of our brave soldiers and seamen.

*Mr. Alderman Curtis* would not say any thing against the late First Lord of the Admiralty, but unquestionably much of our trade had suffered for want of protection. The Alderman said, French ships sailed better than the British; and the Commerce de Marseilles, he believed, was one of the finest ships that had ever been built.

*Alderman Anderson* said, that whatever blame might be attributed to the Admiralty for inattention to convoys, he was fully persuaded that the Irish and Baltic commerce had been sufficiently protected. He agreed that many losses appeared on Lloyd's List; but he wished to know if the merchants, who had suffered in these instances, had applied for convoys? He was inclined to think, that the captures alluded to had arisen

arisen from the rashness of the merchants, who would not wait for convoys; and when he reflected on these serious losses, he wished for a law prohibiting the sailing of traders in time of war without a convoy.

*Mr. David Scott* was of the same opinion. He said, that the East India and the West India, as well as our coasting trade, and all others who waited properly for convoy, had been fully protected by the Admiralty.

*Mr. Brandling* thought there was no way of making peace but by a strong navy; and adverted to the French fleet in the Northern seas, where, he said, three of their ships were cruizing for three months, and had taken 52 of our merchant vessels. He asked, if the Admiralty could not have prevented this? And said, it was a duty he owed to his constituents, to inquire into the cause of this misfortune attending our trade.

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* wished to know of *Mr. Brandling*, when he had received this information?

*Mr. Brandling* said, Two months ago, at the Trinity-house, whither an answer from the Admiralty concerning the same had been sent.

*Sir Richard Hill* justified the conduct of the Admiralty, and assigned the poverty of our enemy in commerce, and our not being at war with Portugal and Spain, as a reason for our not capturing many vessels. All the ships formerly employed in trade by France, were now converted into privateers, which pop out of the ports, and instantly seize every ship they can. He could not, however, impute any blame to the Admiralty, and should, therefore, heartily vote for the supply.

*Sir Matthew W. Ridley* corroborated *Mr. Brandling's* account of some losses in the North Seas, after information had been sent to the Admiralty that French frigates were cruizing there; but said, that he was not, any more than his colleague, prepared to blame ministers on that account.

*Mr. M. Montague* defended the conduct of the Admiralty, on the ground of our commerce being so extensive, that it was impossible to protect it in every point. The naval campaign, however, had been one of the most brilliant in the annals of the country.

*Mr. Lambton* said, he had conversed with the masters of ships taken, who assured him they had seen thirty English prizes together in a French port. He was also informed that the French had sent all over the country where timber was to be found, models of the several parts and individual timbers of ships of the line, by which the people were instructed to cut down and hew out in the rough, the several parts, which were afterwards finished and put together in the dock-yards, so that in the course of a very little time they would be able to launch  
sixty

sixty new ships. These, they were aware, being made of unseasoned timber, would not last long, but the number, not the durability, was their present object. Thinking, therefore, that every possible effort ought to be made in the naval department of this country, he should vote for 100,000 seamen, as he would have voted with greater pleasure for 150,000. Money laid out on our navy, Mr. Lambton said, would be much better employed than money given to the Emperor, perhaps to betray us. The late First Lord of the Admiralty, he knew, from private acquaintance, to be not only an amiable but an able man. If delays in the service had occurred, he was persuaded they were not owing to the Noble Lord. But he knew him also to be a very diffident man, and thought he had wished to retire from his situation, not because he dreaded inquiry, but because he understood that the Public was dissatisfied. This testimony he was happy to bear him.

*A Member* recommended a College, with a Board, &c. for the improvement of naval architecture. It was thus, he observed, the Romans acquired a maritime, as well as a military reputation. By what he understood, when on board the French captures at Spithead, from some experienced officers there, they had a greater breadth of beam, and were consequently better enabled to support a greater stress of sail. Our upper decks fall home, as the technical phrase is, with a great press of sail, for want of this breadth of beam. There was a ship building at Chatham, in which it was expected this defect would be remedied. Still, however, he wished, as the Parliament had instituted a Board of Agriculture, they would also institute one of Naval Architecture.

*Admiral Gardner* said, that from the 1st of January 1794, to the 1st of January 1795, 108 convoys had been applied for and granted. In this service, 140 ships of war were employed, besides 16 constantly on duty for the protection of the coasting trade.

*Mr. Yorke* said, he should make no observations on the conduct of the Admiralty, till further inquiry should be made into it. The protection granted to our trade had undoubtedly fallen short of expectation; but whether or not that was owing to the late First Lord of the Admiralty, he did not pretend to decide. Many of the captures, he believed, had been owing to the captains of merchant-ships sailing without convoy, or being inattentive to the directions of the convoy when they sailed with it. On this subject he thought an Act of Parliament ought to be passed.

*Mr. Sheridan* said, in answer to a question asked in the course of the conversation, that the mark of dissatisfaction with the

conduct of the late First Lord of the Admiralty he alluded to, was, his not being invited to the dinner given by the American merchants to Mr. Jay, the Minister Plenipotentiary from the United States.

*Sir John Sinclair* said, the discussion would be productive of much good, and began explaining, under five heads, a plan for giving greater efficiency to the navy.

*Mr. Rolfe* said also, that the discussion would do much good, and added, that he had found the late First Lord of the Admiralty exceedingly attentive to all the applications he had made to him.

The question on the resolution was put and carried, and the report ordered to be received to-morrow.

The House then went into a Committee of Ways and Means. The Land and Malt taxes were voted, and the report ordered to be received to-morrow.

Adjourned at eight o'clock.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THURSDAY, Jan. 8.

The report of the Committee of Supply, by which one hundred thousand men are voted for the sea service for thirteen months, at five pounds per man per month, &c. being brought up.

The resolution was read a first and second time, and agreed to *nam. con.*

The report of the resolutions of the Committee of Ways and Means, by which the usual vote on Land and Malt was passed, being brought up, read, and agreed to, Bills were ordered to be brought in, in pursuance of it.

Adjourned.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS.

FRIDAY, Jan. 9.

*Lord Viscount Stopford* reported that his Majesty had given directions that there be laid before the House, the various documents specified in the Addresses of Wednesday.

The Land and Malt duty Bills were read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time.

*Mr. Rose* observed, that with regard to the Land Tax Bill, it contained an exception in favour of those officers of the navy, and of the widows of such officers to whom his Majesty had been pleased to grant pensions: The amount of the sum to be thus allowed to them was ten or twelve hundred

dred pounds a year; and a list of the names would appear, with the sums, in the papers on the table.

Mr. Rose then moved, that there be laid before the House an account of the nett produce of all the taxes ending on the 5th of January 1795.—Ordered.

The Committees of Supply, and Ways and Means, were deferred to Monday next; to which day the House adjourned.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS.

MONDAY, Jan. 12.

Read a second time, the Land and Malt duty Bills, and ordered them to be committed to-morrow.

### HABEAS CORPUS.

*The Attorney General* gave notice, that, on Thursday next, he should move for leave to bring in a Bill to continue the Act of the last session of Parliament, to empower his Majesty to secure and detain such persons as he shall suspect to be conspiring against his person and government; that is, to renew the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act.

The Committees of Supply and Ways and Means, were deferred to Thursday.

Adjourned.

## HOUSE OF LORDS.

TUESDAY, Jan. 13.

The order of the day for their Lordships to take into further consideration the proceedings on the trial of Warren Hastings being read,

*The Lord Chancellor* left the Woolfack, and lamented that a Noble and Learned Lord (Lord Thurlow), of whose assistance the House must generally wish to have the advantage, in respect to the trial of Mr. Hastings, was unfortunately prevented by indisposition from attending in his place. In a few days, he trusted, the Noble and Learned Lord might be enabled to be present; and, as it would be right, in a matter of so much moment, to profit by the wisdom of their ancestors, to lose no time he should move, that a Committee be appointed to search for precedents of the proceedings that had heretofore been held in cases of impeachment by the Commons, between the closing of the evidence and the delivering judgment.

His Lordship moved accordingly; and that the said Committee do meet the next day.

The House then adjourned to Thursday.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS.

TUESDAY, Jan. 13.

*Mr. Fox* presented a petition on behalf of the Electors of the City of Westminster, praying against the decision of the last Committee on the right of election for the city of Westminster.—Ordered to be taken into consideration on the 3d of March next.

*Mr. Speaker* acquainted the House, that he had received, from Sir Charles Grey, Knight of the most Honourable Order of the Bath, the following letter, in return to the thanks of this House, signified to him by Mr. Speaker, in obedience to their commands of the 20th day of May, in the last session of Parliament.

" SIR,

*Martinico, Nov. 26th, 1794.*

" By the Queen Charlotte packet, arrived this day, I received the honour of your letter of the 21st of May last, with the votes of thanks from the House of Commons of Great Britain to me, and the army under my command.

" We feel this flattering testimonial of the public approbation of our conduct, and the polite terms of your letter, Sir, by which it is communicated, as the most eminent favour, and are thereby impressed with the warmest and most lively sense of gratitude.

" I have the honour to be, with the greatest respect,

" SIR,

" Your most obedient, and most humble Servant,

" CHARLES GREY."

" P. S. A note from Mr. King, Deputy Secretary of State, acquaints me, that your letter, with those resolutions, had been so long detained there, in the expectation of my arrival in England.

The Right Hon. H. Addington,  
Speaker of the House of Commons, &c. &c. &c.

*Mr. Speaker* also acquainted the House, that he had received from Sir John Jervis, Knight of the most Honourable Order of the Bath, the following letter, in return to the thanks of this House, signified to him by Mr. Speaker, in obedience to their commands of the 20th day of May, in the last session of Parliament.

" SIR,

" On the arrival of the Queen Charlotte packet, I am this day honoured with your letter, dated the 21st of May, transmitting the resolutions of the House of Commons, so flattering to myself, and to the officers, seamen,  
and

and marines, it was my good fortune to command during the late operations in these seas. I shall lose no time in communicating them to Rear Admiral Thompson, and to the captains, officers, seamen, and marines, who remain on the Leeward Island Station.

"No language I am master of can express my gratitude upon this occasion; and I request you will do me the honour to convey the same to the House in the fullest manner.

"The very elegant terms in which you, Sir, have been pleased to communicate these resolutions claim my warmest thanks; and I have the honour to be with the greatest respect,

"SIR,

"Your most obedient, and most humble Servant,

Boyne, St. Pierre, Martinique,

"J. JERVIS."

26th November 1794.

The Right Honourable Henry Addington, &c. &c. &c.\*

\* The following is the Letter of Lord Hood, announced by the Speaker on the 31st of December 1794, to have been received by him from his Lordship, which we accidentally omitted to insert in its place.

"SIR,

*Victory, off Calvi, July 30th, 1794.*

"I have this day received the very obliging letter you did me the honour to write me on the 21st of last month, with two resolutions of the House of Commons.

"I am most truly sensible, Sir, of the very high and distinguished honour the House has done me in thinking me deserving of its thanks; and shall not fail to make known to the several officers, seamen, marines, and soldiers, the second resolution of the House, expressive of acknowledgment and approbation of their spirited and meritorious exertions.

"In doing my utmost upon all occasions against the common enemy, I did no more than I ought; all I have to boast is, being fortunate in the opportunities I have had of proving my inclination to discharge my duty, as a faithful servant to my King and Country; and that, whenever I have been at the head of a Squadron of his Majesty's fleet, I never experienced any other contention amongst the admirals, captains, officers, and men, than who should be most forward in fulfilling my wishes: This, Sir, I am, and ever shall be proud of. But whilst the Representatives of Great Britain in Parliament are so ready, not only to accept, but distinguish by reward, honest endeavours, as substantial services, the nation will never want able and zealous officers.

"To you, Sir, I feel infinitely indebted for the very polite and obliging manner in which you have conveyed to me a vote of the House of Commons so highly honourable to me, for which, to the House as well as you, Sir, my gratitude can cease only with my life.

"I have the honour to be, with the purest sentiments of respect and esteem,

"SIR,

"Your most faithful and obliged humble Servant,

"HOOD."

To the Rt. Hon. H. Addington,  
Speaker of the House of Commons.

The



The Malt Duty Bill passed the Committee, and the report was ordered to be received to-morrow.

The Land Tax Bill being in a Committee,

*Mr. Rose* presented a clause in favour of officers and their widows, who receive pensions, &c. which, after a short conversation between *Mr. Rose* and *Mr. Alderman Curtis*, was received. The Bill then passed the Committee, and the Report was ordered to be received to-morrow.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS.

WEDNESDAY, Jan. 14.

The Malt Duty Bill was reported, ordered to be engrossed, and to be read a third time to-morrow, if then engrossed.

On reading the clause in favour of officers and their widows, in the Land Tax Bill, a short conversation took place between *Mr. Alderman Curtis*, *Mr. Alderman Anderson*, and *Mr. Rose*. The worthy Magistrates stated, that their constituents, the inhabitants of the Tower district, would be taxed about 1000*l.* a year more than they formerly were; they approved of the principle of the clause, provided it was borne by the Public at large.

*Mr. Rose* observed, that if the clause were to be abandoned, the inhabitants of the Tower district would not be in the least benefited, for that the duty on pensions by way of land-tax was payable at the place where the pensions were to be received, which was not now in the district of the Tower, but at Somerset House, in the Duchy of Lancaster. This conversation ended in an understanding, that *Mr. Rose* shall concur, as a Member of Parliament, in some measure that may be brought forward for the benefit of the inhabitants of the Tower district next year.

The Bill was then ordered to be engrossed, and to be read a third time to-morrow, if then engrossed.

*The Secretary at War* brought up an account of foreign troops in the service of Great Britain for the last year.—Ordered to be laid on the table.

The Committees of Supply and Ways and Means were dissolved to Friday.

Adjourned.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THURSDAY, Jan. 15.

*Mr. Serjeant Adair* moved for a new writ for the Borough of Makon, in the county of York, in the room of Richard Burke, Esq. deceased.—Ordered.

Another new writ was ordered for a Commissioner for Kirkcudbright, in the room of Major General Stewart, deceased.

*Mr. Hufsey* said, as he saw the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his place, who had, during the last session, challenged the attention and investigation of the House to every proceeding which related to public money; as *Mr. Hufsey* was absent on a former occasion, he was anxious to put a question to the Right Hon. Gentleman, in regard to the Imperial loan. He said he hoped before the Budget was open, that the House would have an opportunity of giving the subject of the Imperial loan a distinct discussion, as it was of great importance to the Public to know on what grounds we guaranteed the payment, and whether it was in consequence of our considering the Emperor in the character of an ally. For these reasons he hoped the Chancellor of the Exchequer would name some day for the discussion of that transaction, before the Budget was brought forward.

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* replied, that the Hon. Member might perhaps not have been in the House when he had said a few words on a former night on that subject. He had then stated, that the Imperial loan and the Budget were so blended, that he could hardly separate them in what he should have to submit to the House. He had thought of the matter a good deal since. He had as great a desire as any other Member of the House could have, that the subject should be fully discussed; and he hoped an opportunity would offer for that purpose. He wished the question, whether it was proper, under all the present circumstances, the proposed pecuniary aid from this country should be granted to the Emperor, for his military assistance in the course of the common cause, should be fully discussed. He therefore thought that he should have it in command to convey to that House a message from his Majesty, in which something of that kind would be laid before them; this he believed would take place in the course of the next week, and he intended, when he came down that day, to give notice that something of that nature would be laid before the House, for the purpose of discussion early in the ensuing week, and that consequently he should be under the necessity

cessity of postponing the opening of the Budget for two or three days beyond the time at which the notice now stood.

*Mr. Hussy* said, he wished it to be understood, that he said nothing about the propriety of giving the Emperor the proposed assistance; the point he wanted to have ascertained was, whether or not the Emperor had been over-reached in the loan he had made? He did not mean to dispute the propriety of giving support to the Emperor; but if we did mean to assist him, it should be done fairly and effectually: He wished therefore to enforce the necessity of having the matter fully investigated.

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, it would be open to the Hon. Member to bring forward any proposition, when the subject should come before the House; but he owned, that he had for some time felt a difficulty in stating the matter separately and distinct from the Budget, and that arose out of the nature of what he thought was necessary to be proposed; however, he wished for the most ample discussion of the subject.

#### HABEAS CORPUS.

*The Attorney General* rose in consequence of a notice he had given, that he should have the honour of submitting to the House a motion for leave to bring in a Bill to continue the provision of a Bill passed in the last session of Parliament, to empower his Majesty to secure and detain such persons as he should suspect to be conspiring against his person and government. He was sure the House would have the indulgence to hear him while he delivered a few words upon that subject. He happened to be absent on the first night of the session; had he been present it would have been part of his duty to submit to the House some observations on the late trials, and also on what fell from many Members that night, and he felt some disappointment that the observations which fell from many on the subsequent debate on that subject, were such as precluded him from stating what his duty, in his view of it, called upon him to state, and therefore he gave notice of the motion with which he should have the honour of concluding. He did not expect the House would be very full that night, and as he thought that strong objections might still be offered to the measure on the part of those who had opposed it formerly, he thought that some future day would be appointed for the discussion of it; but after what had passed this session, he hoped they would give him leave to bring in the Bill, and he would state the ground on which he brought it forward, at large, on another occasion; the whole of the discussion he should refer to that future period. With that understanding, he

he trusted there would not be any objection to giving leave to bring in the Bill without further argument, as he wished the subject to be discussed in a full House. He moved, that the title of the Act of the last session of Parliament, which enabled his Majesty to secure such persons as he shall suspect, &c. be read; which being done, he moved, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to continue the provisions of the said Act for a time to be limited."

*Mr. Sheridan* said, it was in one thing only he could agree with the Learned Gentleman, whose motion had been just read, namely, "That, to proceed in the discussion of such a subject, in so thin a House, would be improper;" for no person could have imagined that such a measure would have been brought forward at all, much less debated, when the number of Members was barely sufficient to form a House. As the call of the House was so near, he, for his own part, doubted whether it would not be as good a course as any he could take, to suffer this motion to pass, and to reserve opposition to the day of the discussion. There was one thing however to be observed from the thinness of the House, and which appeared to him to be a good omen:—It proved, that the House in general did not believe in the existence of any plots or conspiracies, on the foundation of which the *Habeas Corpus* Act was suspended; so little did they think so, that they had not even the curiosity to come and hear the Learned Gentleman open the merits of his case. He therefore took it for granted, that he should not hear of any new plots, or new conspiracies, or new discoveries of treasonable practices; since in the threatened Speech of the Attorney General, there was not one word of fresh information: It was evident he intended to make out his case out of the good old plot. He must however say, as nothing new had been advanced on the subject, he could not expect but that all those who opposed the former Bill would be against this motion; and if he did not take the sense of the House upon the question, even in this stage of the business, it was because he did not wish to expose to the Public the miserable attendance manifested on an occasion of such extreme importance.

*The Attorney General* said a few words in reply, the tendency of which were, that he did not mean to bring forward any new grounds of conspiracy on the present occasion.

*Lord William Russell* said, that on the renewal of a measure such as this, which deprived the people of this country of such essential rights, he expected to hear a case made out that called for some rigour. When the people of England were to be told they were to give up their liberty, some reason should be

assigned in order to shew that it was the effect of the most imminent danger, and arose from inevitable necessity.

*Mr. Lambton* confessed, that on a matter of so much importance as the present, he expected to hear some reason assigned for the measure proposed. He could never consent to depriving Englishmen of rights so dear to them, on grounds so equivocal as those on which the *Habeas Corpus* Act had been suspended last year; he expected to hear of some new plots and conspiracies, but to find the same attempt made upon the old excuse really astonished him; and still the more when he reflected on the late trials, and the evidence given on the part of the Crown, as well as various other circumstances which were fresh in the recollection of them all: He would repeat, that in such a case as the present, he was astonished that an attempt should be made to suspend the provisions of an Act so dear to Englishmen.

*The Solicitor General* said, that as the House had already determined that the original ground was sufficient for suspending the *Habeas Corpus* Act, he conceived that to assign any new ground was perfectly unnecessary.

*Mr. Francis* said, that if the ground on which the *Habeas Corpus* Act had been suspended last year was sufficient, very new ground had appeared since, not for continuing the suspension, but for removing it. This new ground arose out of the late trials; out of the cases of those who had been treated as criminals, and had suffered long, arbitrary, and harsh confinement. These persons had been tried and acquitted; and whatever some persons might say, he would venture to assert, that by their acquittal a negative was put to all ideas of plots, on which the Act of Parliament had been suspended. And now an attempt was made to keep on the same restraint, as that to which we had been before subjected, and to leave the liberties of all at the will of the Crown, where, he would ask, was the new conspiracy? or who were the new conspirators? He would maintain it, there was not the shadow of a justification for preparing to offer this insult to the honour of the country, a thing which ministers had often done, and which they were doing again in this instance.

*Mr. Austriuther* said, that as it was understood that the subject was not to be discussed then, he would not have spoken, had it not been for an expression which fell from the Hon. Gentleman who spoke last, viz. *arbitrary punishment*. He denied there having been any arbitrary or harsh confinement in the cases of the persons who had been tried for high treason; they had not, he said, been confined one hour longer than by law they

they must have been, if the Act for the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* had never passed. These persons had no right to complain, any of them; for the Grand Jury had shewn, by finding the bill, that they were of opinion, that there was probable cause for supposing they were guilty. They had suffered no punishment at all, and they had suffered no confinement to which they were not liable in the due course of law. With respect to any new circumstances in the case of a conspiracy, that was not the day on which that topic was to be discussed.

Mr. Francis said in explanation, that he considered the cases of the persons acquitted, as very hard cases; he meant to say, they had sustained unjust penalties. Gentlemen, on the other side, said, that imprisonment, such as these persons suffered, was no punishment at all. He trusted in God a day would come when they themselves would know what it was.

Mr. Grey supported the propriety of the observations of Mr. Francis, on the hardships of the persons who had been tried for high treason. He doubted the truth of the observation of a Learned Gentleman (Mr. Anstruther), that the persons accused had suffered no more than if the Act for suspending the *Habeas Corpus* had never passed; he understood, on the contrary, that if that Act had not passed, they would have been entitled to their trials at the next assizes. However, tried at last they were; and honourably to themselves, and happily for this country, they were acquitted. He thought it something ominous, that the further suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act was to be so much a matter of course in that House, that they were not even to have a full attendance on it. He agreed with those who thought that strong grounds of necessity indeed should be laid, before Englishmen should lose the dearest rights they ever enjoyed. This was a case of too important a nature to be passed by in any stage of it; and therefore he must persist in taking the sense of the House upon it.

Mr. Serjeant Watson explained the operation of law, in case of high treason, to be, that if any person accused of that crime be not brought to his trial at the second assizes, he shall be discharged; and, therefore, he maintained, that the persons whose cases had been taken notice of that evening, had been tried as early as by law they would have been entitled to be tried, if the *Habeas Corpus* Act had not been suspended.

Mr. Whitbread also thought it necessary that the sense of the House should be taken on that occasion; the situation of the case itself, in his mind, absolutely required it. If he had approved last year of the ground on which the *Habeas Corpus* Act had been suspended, the only question would then be, whether the same ground remained, so that the suspension ought to be

continued; and even upon that way of putting the question, he found himself bound to vote against the measure in agitation, for the very ground on which the whole was founded had been entirely taken away. But judging, as he did, that there never was a ground for the suspension, he had an additional reason for voting against the measure. It had been asserted, that not one person had been detained in prison for one hour longer than if the Act of suspension had not passed into a law: That was another reason for his being of opinion that there existed no just cause for suspending the *Habeas Corpus* Act; for if the very persons alleged to be the most forward in the conspiracy, on account of which the Act of Parliament was passed, were no longer detained in prison than if the Act had never been passed, it was pretty clear it was unnecessary to pass it; of the truth of this, ministers seemed themselves to be aware, for the last person to have been tried, had a few days ago been liberated; he alluded to the case of Mr. Martin.

Mr. Austriuther was going to proceed, but he was called to order by the Speaker.

The House divided,

For the motion	71
Against it	13
Majority	58

Adjourned.

## HOUSE OF LORDS.

FRIDAY, Jan. 16.

The Land and Malt-tax Bills were read a second time, and committed for to-morrow.—Adjourned.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS.

FRIDAY, Jan. 16.

The Secretary at War (Mr. Windham) said, as the Secretary of State for the War Department (Mr. Dundas) was unavoidably absent, it might be proper to put off the discussion of the Army Estimates till a future day. He proposed, therefore, to move them in the Committee of Supply on Wednesday next.

General Tarleton said, that in the present alarming situation of the army on the Continent, and the critical state of affairs at home, it would be a proper mark of the diligence of the House to sit next day, and either then or on Monday, the Hon. Gentleman

Gentleman might take an opportunity to bring forward the Army Estimates, which would so far tend to quiet the public mind.

*The Speaker* stated, that the days for the Committee of Supply, in which the Estimates must be brought forward, were Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. He supposed that the House at rising would adjourn over Monday. The Hon. Member was, however, competent to move, though not consistent with the usual practice, that the House might sit in a Committee of Supply next day.—It was understood that the Army Estimates should be deferred till Wednesday.

The Sheriffs of the City of London attended at the bar, with a petition from the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Commons, in Common Council assembled, stating that the avenues leading to Temple Bar were narrow and incommodious. The petition was brought up, read, and ordered to be referred to a Select Committee.

*Mr Sheridan* observed, that though the Secretary of State for the War Department was absent, yet as the Secretary at War was in his place, he wished to ask him a question. He considered that in the present calamitous situation of affairs, the Public had not only great reason, but a right, to complain of the want of early and authentic intelligence, with respect to the events passing in Holland. No Gazette had appeared to announce the particulars of what had lately happened in that quarter. This he considered as a very unpardonable neglect with respect to the Public, at a period when affairs wore so alarming an aspect and as it was so particularly distressing to the individuals who had relatives with the army, and were thus left in a state of the most painful anxiety and suspense with respect to their fate.

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that he could scarcely conceive the Hon. Gentleman to be serious in the remark which he had brought forward. What interest could the Hon. Gentleman possibly conceive ministers to have, in keeping from the Public the knowledge of any disaster for a space of twenty-four hours, whatever regret they might feel upon the occasion? The fact, however, was, that a Gazette had been some time in preparation, and was now, he believed, printed off; and, had the Hon. Gentleman gone home, he would have found the answer to his question in a copy of the Gazette upon his table.

*Mr. Sheridan* said, that he found it difficult to account how the Right Hon. Gentleman should conceive him to be otherwise than serious in the disastrous situation of affairs, into which the country had been brought by the present war to use a harsher



harsher term—unfortunate Administration ; a situation which was becoming every day more and more alarming. He was equally at a loss to account what preparation could be necessary in order to lay before the Public a simple narrative of facts. Ministers might make light of a delay of twenty-four hours in communicating intelligence ; but if they were so negligent of their duty to the Public, yet still some consideration was due to the feelings of those individuals, who were kept upon the rack from uncertainty, with respect to the fate of their relatives ; and to them a delay of twenty-four hours was a consideration of no small consequence.

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* stated, that there were two objects which he wished to bring forward at the earliest opportunity. The one was the consideration of the Austrian Loan, which he supposed he should be authorised to bring before the House, by a message from his Majesty, in the course of next week. The other was an object, in which, from the sentiments that had been expressed from all quarters, he could not doubt of the unanimous concurrence of the House—the consideration of the most efficient means to be taken for manning the navy.

After a conversation of considerable length and intricacy, the arrangement of business for next week was settled as follows :

The House to be called over on Tuesday.

The Army Estimates to be moved in a Committee of Supply on Wednesday ; the further suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Bill to be debated on Thursday ; and on Friday the motion of Mr. Grey (which stood for Tuesday), with respect to peace with the present government of France.

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* stated, that on Friday he expected to be authorised by his Majesty, to bring down the message relative to the Austrian loan, which would of course be taken into consideration on the Monday following. He should likewise take the earliest opportunity of bringing forward his Budget.

The Bill for renewing an Act passed last session, suspending the *Habeas Corpus*, &c. was read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time on Thursday next.

*Mr. Martin* said, that he had come down yesterday, expecting that the discussion of a measure so serious as the motion for leave to bring in this Bill, would have occupied a considerable time, and was very much surprised to find that the House had adjourned at an early hour. He took therefore this opportunity to state, that under the present circumstances, he considered it as his duty to give his most decided negative to this Bill in every stage of its progress.

AUSTRIAN

## AUSTRIAN LOAN.

*Mr. Sheridan* thought that the motion of his Hon. Friend (Mr. Grey) ought to precede the bringing forward the Austrian loan, inasmuch as, if the latter took place, it would interfere with the former; for if a majority should be found in favour of Mr. Grey's motion, this would operate strongly against the necessity of the loan. On a former night, he said, he had stated the necessity of being furnished with the proper documents relative to the extent of the services rendered us by the King of Prussia, in compensation for the twelve hundred thousand pounds given him; that as the arrangements were settled at present, he should take the first opportunity to move for the correspondence relative to the Prussian subsidy, as he considered it of great consequence, before we entered into new engagements with the Emperor, to ascertain what use had been made of the money already taken from this country in the way of subsidy, and what reliance could be placed on the fidelity of our continental allies.

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* replied, that at first it was imagined that the Austrian loan might be collaterally considered with the ways and means of the current year; but as it had been suggested by some Hon. Gentlemen, that it would be better to discuss it independently of any other question, and to introduce it under the sanction of a message from the Throne, it should, on a future day, be introduced in this form.

The House at rising adjourned till Tuesday.

## HOUSE OF LORDS.

TUESDAY, Jan. 26.

The order of the day being read, for all the Lords to be summoned,

*The Duke of Bedford* moved, that it should be discharged, and that their Lordships should be summoned for Tuesday next.

Adjourned to next day.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS.

TUESDAY, Jan. 26.

A message was brought from the Lords, acquainting the Commons, that their Lordships had agreed to the Land Tax and Malt-Duty Bills; and that their Lordships had passed Peter Vandyke's Naturalization Bill.

Yan-

Yarmouth Roads, and ~~Honley~~ **Castle** Inclosure Bills, were reported, and ordered to be ingrossed.

The Grand Junction Canal Bill was read a second time, and committed.

Aston Cold, Gloucester Bridge, Casterton, Rutland, St. Martin, Stamford Baron, Northampton, and Bisbroke Rutland, Inclosure Petitions, were presented, and Bills ordered.

Petitions for Bills for repairing Wallingford Roads, for paving the Streets of Reading, and for repairing Llangadock Roads, were presented and referred to a Committee.

A petition from the Merchants, Traders, Ship-Owners, and Inhabitants of Kingston upon Hull and its Vicinity, praying, that such means may be taken on the part of Government, as may best conduce to the restoring of peace to this kingdom, was presented, and ordered to lie on the table.

Copy of the instrument of the appointment of Sir Gilbert Elliot, and an account of the salary payable to him, and out of what fund to be, were ordered.

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* presented a copy of the order in Council, permitting the importation of goods, wares, and merchandize, from the United Provinces of Holland; and orders from Council respecting corn; which were ordered to lie on the table.

#### CALL OF THE HOUSE.

The order of the day being read, for the Call of the House, the Members were called accordingly, and the defaulters were ordered to attend in their places on Friday next. After which,

*Mr. Fox* moved, that the House be called over on this day (Tuesday) se'nnight; and that, during that interval, no Member do leave town without express permission from that House.—Ordered.

Adjourned to the next day.

#### HOUSE OF LORDS.

WEDNESDAY, Jan. 21.

The Land and Malt Tax Bills received the Royal assent by commission.

The reports of the Committee appointed to search for precedents in cases of Impeachment, was received, and ordered to be taken into consideration on Monday next.

Adjourned till Friday.

HOUSE

## HOUSE OF COMMONS.

WEDNESDAY, Jan. 21.

The Usher of the Black Rod (Sir Francis Molyneux) desired the attendance of the Commons in the Upper House. The Speaker, at his return, stated, that the House had attended in the House of Peers, where the assent of his Majesty had been given by commission to two Bills, empowering certain duties to be levied on land and malt, &c.

## DUTCH PROPERTY.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer brought up a copy of an order of Council, with respect to receiving goods belonging to Holland in his Majesty's warehouses.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer stated, that the object of the order of the 16th was to receive in his Majesty's warehouses all goods shipped from Holland; the object of the order of the 21st, which he had just brought up, was to receive goods that might be bound for Holland. As there could be but one opinion on the expediency of such a step, he should immediately move for leave to bring in a Bill for rendering effectual the order of his Majesty's Council, &c. On the suggestion of the Speaker, the motion was made in a Committee of Trade, agreed to by the Committee, the report immediately brought up, and, after the second reading, agreed to by the House.

## CORN.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, in a Committee of the whole House, moved for leave to bring in a Bill, prohibiting the exportation of grain from Scotland, and permitting the importation of grain and all other articles of provision into England duty free.

Mr. Hussey asked, whether, in the present scarcity of provisions, it might not be proper to stop the distilleries?—He understood that a great quantity of wheat was at present consumed by the distillers, but he was not so positive respecting the expediency of the measure as to make any proposition upon the subject; he rather put it in the form of a question, that he might receive information from Gentlemen who were better acquainted with the circumstances of the case, than he professed to be.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer replied, that a partial cessation in the distilleries had already taken place. At present the quantity of wheat employed in the distilleries was of no considerable amount, and he doubted whether the advantage likely to

arise from the measure, would be such as to balance the inconvenience with which it would be attended.

*Mr. Buxton* remarked, that a regulation with respect to hair-powder might be extremely beneficial to the poor: Every pound consumed such a quantity of wheat as could not readily be conceived.

*Mr. Fox* said, that it would be difficult to introduce any regulation of that sort, without laying a prohibition on the making of wheat into starch, which would be, in every point of view, attended with great inconvenience. He admitted, however, that the subject was extremely worthy of consideration; and, if there was a time at which it was incumbent upon that House to attend to the state of provisions, the present was particularly urgent, not only from the pressure of the general war, and the consequent calamities to the poor, but from the failure of the harvest, which he understood had by no means answered the sanguine prospects at first entertained, and the unhappy situation of Poland, doomed to sterility by the iron hand of oppression, which precluded all hopes of any supply from that quarter; France, finding its territory ravaged by the invasions of its enemies, has been forced to have recourse to America, from which we were wont to derive ample supplies; and the exportations from this country for the maintenance of the Continental armies, had impoverished the laborious and peaceful part of the community.

*Mr. Hussey* said, that from what he understood of the high price of barley, and likewise from a circumstance of the brewers having lately stopt on account of the scarcity of malt, in all probability he might be encouraged speedily to bring forward some such proposition as he had originally suggested.

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* replied, that there was little wheat used at present by the distillers, and that, as the inconvenience did not arise from that cause, it would be impolitic to repeal or suspend the Distillery Act, from which the revenue had derived such considerable accessions.

The report was then received, and leave given to bring in a Bill.

*Colonel Maitland* said, that with a view to further discussion he proposed now to make a motion, on which he should not enlarge, as he understood that it would meet with no opposition. He therefore moved, "That an humble Address be presented to his Majesty, to give directions, that there should be laid before the House a return of the names, dates of commission, and length of service, of those who since the commencement of the war had been appointed field officers, those who had received brevet rank not being included."

*The*

*The Secretary at War* (Mr. Windham) stated, that if the Hon. Gentleman, by his motion, meant to ascertain that rank had not always been bestowed according to seniority, that indeed might be matter of regret, but could not be imputed as matter of blame to ministers, who, in the mode which they had adopted, with respect to bestowing promotion, had only accommodated themselves to the necessities of the public service.

*Colonel Maitland* said, in order that ministers might not be at a loss, he would candidly state his motives for making his present motion. He knew extremely well that at the commencement of a war, in order to remedy the scantiness of a peace-establishment, it was necessary to over-step the bounds to which at other times it might be proper to adhere, and that rank was given to such persons of fortune and situation, as were enabled to come forward, and raise regiments for the public service. This was a practice resorted to in all wars, and of which none had a right to complain. Neither did he mean to object to the rapidity of promotion which had lately taken place. But he knew of many instances where men of large fortune, and in a situation which gave them the command of men, had offered to raise regiments, and had been refused—while permission for that purpose had been granted to others in circumstances exactly the reverse. What he had therefore to complain of in the present instance was not any partial deviation from system, but that all system was abandoned, all confidence was destroyed between the soldiers and the officers, the officers and the general; boys from school were set over the heads of veteran officers, and men dragged from prison to the service of their country. Ministers, in short, had rendered the system entirely subservient to their own corrupt views of influence, and had shewn the same neglect in the military department, as in his mind they had done with respect to every other branch of the public service.

The motion was agreed to.

*Lord Arden* brought up the ordinary estimates of the navy, which were ordered to be laid on the table.

#### ARMY ESTIMATES.

The order of the day was read for the House to resolve itself into a Committee of Supply, Mr. Hobart in the Chair.

*The Secretary at War* (Mr. Windham) said, that to those Gentlemen who had had an opportunity of looking into the papers laid upon the table, it would be scarcely possible for him to convey any clearer idea of the estimates, which he was then to move; but as many might not have had this op-

portunity, he should briefly submit to them a summary of the result, reserving himself afterwards to give any explanation that might be required in the course of the discussion. The papers, as had been usual on all former occasions, were divided into the following classes, the estimates of the guards and garrisons, of the forces in the plantations, of the troops lent from Ireland, of the recruiting contingencies, of the pay of the general officers, of the pensions for the widows, and Chelsea Hospital, of the fencible infantry and fencible cavalry, the clothing, &c. Several of these articles were of a nature which called for no explanation. The principal head was that of the guards and garrisons, including all the regular force not employed in distant service, among whom were comprised the troops now serving on the continent, &c. The second head, that of the plantations, comprised all the troops not included in the former; the troops in the West Indies, in Corsica, in Gibraltar, in America, &c. The Secretary at War entered into a number of calculations, into which it is unnecessary that we should follow him; we shall therefore simply present our readers with the results. The whole force on foot, including regulars, militia, and fencibles, he stated to amount to 149,627 men; taking in the Indian regiments, it amounted to a much greater number. This view of the force which Great Britain had been able to produce, he stated to be exceedingly consolatory with respect to her capability of carrying on the present contest; on the other hand, the very great expence at which only so numerous a force could be supported, must no doubt be admitted to operate as a drawback. The expences of this force amounted all together to 6,652,742*l*. The increase in point of numbers had been much more rapid than had taken place in the same period of any former war. It amounted to no less than 73,029 men; the additional expence incurred by this increase, was a sum of 217,548*l*. Having done this, he should no longer detain the House, farther than might be necessary to answer any questions that might arise in the course of the discussion. He concluded with moving the first resolution, that a number of land forces, amounting to 119,000 men, including 3882 invalids, be employed for the service of the year 1795.

*General Tarleton* said, he felt appalled when he viewed our situation; when he considered how much there was to do, and how little had been done—great and heavy expences were incurred, and if they were severe even in the moment of victory, how much more must they be felt, how unpardonable must they prove amidst the disastrous events now surrounding

rounding us ! after a year replete with disgrace and defeat, when it could not be shewn that any of the large sums already expended in carrying on the war, had served any other purpose, except to plunge the country deeper in calamity. In commenting upon the errors of such a system, he should certainly not accuse the present Secretary at War, because it had existed long before he came into the office. He then proceeded to examine the new mode of recruiting. This system of increasing the army, so contrary to every former principle, had taken place so far back as the year 1791, on occasion of the Russian armament, but had not then been carried to any great extent, as the wish of the country at that time was for peace, and the minister thought proper to abandon his object in order to retain his place. Then, however, began the system of multiplying officers, and of crimping men; a system so justly reprobated and so forcibly exposed by the late General Burgoyne, whose memory would, on that account alone, if he had not had other merit, continue dear to every military man. By this new mode of recruiting, veteran officers were either laid under severe contribution, or exposed to have school-boys put over their heads. Hence it was, the old regiments had no men, whilst the independent companies were bidding against each other, and the old veterans of the line remained totally neglected. By the modern regulation, there were two lieutenant-colonels appointed, and if the major should purchase, he perhaps might be reduced soon after. The captains were still in a worse situation. If the eldest captain should think it worth his while to purchase, he must pay 700*l.* and the second captain 500*l.* and then be reduced to the half-pay. He defied any one to prove, that by thus taking money from the pockets of individuals, any good was done to the Public. In order to complete the evil with respect to the nation, it would only be necessary to introduce the same system into the navy, and to allow young men to purchase stores and ships, and take the command of those veteran officers, who had hitherto defended the country, and would still, he trusted, continue to constitute its security and defence. He went into calculations, to shew that by the mode of raising independent companies, and the pay granted to the officers, each man, instead of the nominal sum of 3*l.* in reality cost the country a sum of no less than 19*l.* The new levies, he stated, were raised by school-boys and crimps, and composed of infancy and dotage. He referred to the instance of a young Nobleman (Lord Granard), who had commenced his military career on the 14th of November 1794, and after a rapid elevation to the rank of major, had  
been



been deemed qualified, upon the experience of only seventeen days, to take the command of a regiment, and in the next Gazette jumped into the rank of lieutenant colonel commandant. To the enormous sum of upwards of six millions were to be added the sums for the ordnance, for the extraordinaries of the army, besides the immense sums that must be granted for the support of our allies in different quarters. After remarking that the mode of recruiting for the independent companies and the fencible regiments, was decidedly hostile to the regular supply of the army and navy, he proceeded to take a view of the conduct of the war and the operations of the last campaign, which had every-where been conducted by English intrigue and English gold, as the conduct of the war had been distinguished throughout by folly, rashness, and incapacity. In the West Indies, Sir Charles Grey had been promised a reinforcement of 10,000 men. The whole troops in that quarter amounted only to 5000. With these, however, that gallant and able commander had been able to take Martinique, Guadaloupe, and St. Lucie; but though these places had been taken by a decisive and vigorous plan of operations, there was no force sufficient to defend them. Already Guadaloupe had been wrested from us, and the others might soon be expected to fall. The troops, reduced by pestilential disorders, did not now amount to above 2000. The conquest of St. Domingo was an object too great to be achieved by a handful of men, more resembling a band of buccaneers, than a regular army. In the mean time what had become of the reinforcements, which ought to have been sent by ministers? They were now pining away on board transports in contemptible imbecility, or left to languish in inactivity in the harbour of Portsmouth. He next adverted to the conduct of the war in Flanders from the period of the congress of Antwerp, in which ministers had a share, stating that he meant not to reflect the smallest blame on the illustrious commander, or the officers, who had been entrusted with the active part of the service, but only on those who had the care of concerting the plan of operations at home. He remarked that the first grand error was, neglecting to secure Lisle, the key of Flanders, a place, the possession of which was of the greatest importance for the purpose of a dépôt, and in order to carry on a system of attack against France. He hoped that the public and posterity would know with what wise head, whether civil or military, the plan of the siege of Dunkirk had originated—an attempt which had divided the combined army, and ruined all the subsequent operations. Our miscarriage before Dunkirk had filled the French

French with confidence, and covered us with shame, confusion, and disgrace.

—He then went over the various events of the campaign, the attack upon the Lys—the loss of Tournay—the evacuation of Ostend, leaving Nieuport to its fate—the fall of Condé, Quesnoy, and Landrecies—together with the stores and magazines lost; also the disasters and defeats of the last campaign. He would not, he said, attempt to describe them, for the scene of calamity was not yet closed, and was such as could not be surveyed by any Englishman without the keenest sensations of melancholy and regret. In this situation of national disaster, and retracing amidst this cloud of misfortune, where could they look for a vestige of consolation? Was there any consolation to be derived from the economical arrangements of ministers? They had to deplore an immoderate expenditure amidst all our disadvantages, and our allies faithless and deserting us, the vigour of Austria and the avarice of Prussia having become proverbial; yet we were even now about to give the enormous sum of 6,000,000*l.* for which we had no means to compel the payment of either principal or interest. A system of lavish expence was persisted in without any object, and the profusion and credulity of Great Britain kept pace with the avarice and perfidy of her allies.

He would ask a young Colonel (Jenkinson) what was the plan by which he now proposed to march to Paris? He would ask a Noble Lord (Mornington) whether Robespierre had left him the same legacy with Brissot, and enabled him to amuse that House in a speech of four hours on the tyranny of the French government, and the instability of their resources? Notwithstanding all the reasonings of ministerialists and alarmists, every change had been prejudicial to this country; all their conclusions had failed, and all their arguments proved futile. Indeed he would propose to the good sense of every Member present, whether every change that had taken place in France had not been more and more unfavourable to this country. He would tell the Right Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Pitt) that the taking of Toulon had exceeded the most glorious achievements of his illustrious father, who had sent more troops against the Havannah than he had thought necessary to employ for the reduction of all the French West India islands. Suppose even that the operations of next campaign were completely successful, that Holland was recovered, and the French driven within their frontier; it would cost fifty millions and torrents of blood to restore the country to the situation in which it had been at the commencement of last campaign. The anticipation of a different  
event

event was almost too dreadful to be contemplated, even for a moment. Suppose our enemies prosperous; suppose them to conquer Holland, and re-take the West India islands; an invasion of Great Britain and Ireland would be the probable consequences: In short, there was no scene which the most gloomy imagination could form, that might not be realized. What then was the result of the whole view of the subject?—An expensive war, conducted without energy or skill; an improvident and unconstitutional mode of recruiting; generals, who had only been able to exercise their talents in retreats; and the army now left in a most critical and perilous situation! The allies had lost, in the course of different engagements, 350,000 men, 50,000,000 l. had been expended by this country, and a most extraordinary loan contracted by ministers in a manner equally extraordinary: Add to this, the country would be loaded with a debt of 350 millions. Such was the state of affairs in which the country was placed; it was then to determine whether they would look at it with apathy, and take a fresh dose of confidence in ministers, or rouse to a proper sense of the danger, and provide against the evil before it should become too late to apply a remedy, and our constitution itself, and every thing around, sink into inevitable ruin.

*Mr. Hussey* said, that he rose to make a motion, That the Chairman leave the chair, and report progress. The Right Hon. Gentleman had a few days since given notice of his intention to bring forward the discussion of a plan for the more effectual manning of the navy. He was of opinion, that this object ought to supersede all other considerations; and that, if possible, 20,000 men should be added to the 100,000 already voted for the sea-service. He considered exertions in this way as likely to be much more beneficial to the country, than any that could be made by increasing the number of our land forces. The resources of the country were great, but not inexhaustible; he did not believe that they were yet nearly exhausted; but there was, in his opinion, a certain limit, beyond which we could neither raise men nor money. Our last stake ought to be employed as beneficially as possible. He did not mean to say, that we were actually come to the last stake; but, if any one controverted the proposition, that the country was approaching to its last stake, he would mention one or two facts, that might serve to alter their opinion: He had the curiosity to inspect some of the newly-raised regiments, and found them composed of men between 70 and 80, scarcely able to carry a knapsack, and boys of 12 and 13; there was a man in his neighbourhood, *Mr. Hussey* said, who had ten years since been discharged as unfit

unfit for the service, and who was lately enlisted, at a bounty of seven guineas. He had given his opinion, that our naval exertions should have been made at an earlier period: And though he was aware of the replies, that such a measure would have cramped our commerce; and that the practice of pressing was unpopular; he should still profess his judgment to be, that our commerce had been more deeply injured by the mode which had been pursued: And that our sailors would have been better pleased to have been pressed into the service of England, than to languish, as they do at present, in the prisons of France. He concluded with making his motion.

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that he did not think with the last Hon. Speaker—that vigorous exertions for the army, at all impeded those that ought to be made for the service of the navy. On the contrary, they had always been found to go hand in hand; and in looking to former wars, it would appear that we had then been most successful at sea, when we had been most powerful by land. The present resolution then, so far from tending to defraud the navy, ought to be considered as having an entirely contrary effect. Was it then to be urged that they were come to such a situation, that if they voted this number of men for the army, they should not be able to provide for the naval service? The Hon. Gentleman has admitted that our resources were still great. It was not, he trusted, to be said, in any pecuniary sense, that this was our last effort. The Hon. Gentleman who had used the words “last stake,” had himself very properly corrected the expression. But, if it be said, that we ought to look to our last stake—that last stake is certainly involved in the ultimate issue of the present contest. We can only in the present moment approach to that exhausted situation by a base timidity, a contemptible imbecility, and unmanly fear, which would induce us to abandon the object of our exertions, and would prove us unworthy of the blessings we enjoy. Though the war, which it had lately been the fashion to term disgraceful, had been attended with heavy and severe pressure, still our resources had increased beyond the proportion of our expences; and that, as far as related to the internal state of the country, to its commerce and its credit, and to the means of recruiting the army and the navy—never was there any war in which the aspect of affairs, after two years of hostility, was so prosperous and encouraging, and in which such great exertions had been made within so short a space. We were yet, he trusted, neither deficient in the means or in the spirit necessary for a vigorous prosecution of the war. Being convinced, then,

VOL. I. O O that

that to put the army on a respectable footing, was the best method to render our naval superiority more secure, and to give effect to our naval exertions; he would rather vote the resolution immediately, than, by deferring it, risk the smallest chance of discouraging the public spirit. And in this determination he was the more confirmed, as whatever wishes might be entertained with respect to negotiation, all quarters had agreed on the necessity of keeping on foot a great and powerful force—a necessity, surely, which it would not be contended, that any thing which lately had occurred had in the smallest degree tended to diminish.

*Mr. Fox* said, if the Right Hon. Gentleman had had the good fortune to be minister of this country in the reign of Queen Anne, when we had, by the wisdom of our measures, gained such military reputation, and which, he hoped, we should never lose; if he had been minister, as his illustrious father was, at the end of what we generally called the seven years war; if he had the reputation which his father had justly established, by securing North America to this country for a time; if he had gained in proportion as he had lost; if he stood in the situation of his enemy, having acquired a success more brilliant than history could record of any single campaign; if he had acquired as much glory by his political conduct, as he had entailed upon himself disgrace; he should then, *Mr. Fox* said, have had some doubt, whether the style and tone of the minister could have been justified: Prudent it could not be in any man, at any time, under any circumstance; but what would the House think, and what would the people feel, when they found such a man coming forward with an air of triumph, under such circumstances? What was to be said of a minister who asked, and that with a tone of authority, for the confidence of the House in this prosecution of the war? A minister who had been so unfortunate, at least, as to see every one of his predictions reversed by events; who had year after year regularly and constantly pursued measures the most wild, extravagant, and dangerous, which experience taught us to be so, and which had brought us into a situation, that, in point of real calamity, was, perhaps, never equalled in this country at any former period—that such a minister could have the hardihood to claim further confidence, was astonishing; it was adding insult to injury. It was telling us, that what the country suffered he regarded not: That he was indifferent to all the defeat, disaster, or disgrace that had befallen us; and that under them all, his spirit remained unbroken. Nor was he content with this, for he affected to cast ridicule on those who opposed the war; it was the fashion to

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call this war calamitous and disgraceful—he should be glad to know, if it was the fashion, who was the cause of it? Would the minister deny any one of the statements that were made of the disastrous events by which the war had been so unhappily distinguished? Would he deny that the object for which the war was undertaken on our part was lost? Would he deny that we had not met with disappointments and defeats, misfortunes and disasters, which were unequalled in the history of this world? Would the minister shew one event in the whole course of the present winter, that could be construed in our favour? Not a week had passed without producing a Gazette, giving some account of our misfortunes. But what reply had he made, what colouring or excuse had he offered, for the numerous disasters which had been quoted even in the course of that day? The rich territory of Flanders had been lost in the last campaign; not by a sudden incursion of the enemy, but by a series of battles and sieges, bloody on both sides, and disastrous to the defeated armies beyond all parallel. The whole of Germany, on the southern side of the Rhine, had been lost, with the single exception of Mentz. A great part of Spain, and of Italy, was now in the possession of the enemy; and some of our West Indian conquests were recovered from us. Did these losses, either collectively or individually taken, amount to nothing like disaster? This was the man who asked for the confidence of the House in future, and who affected to treat with levity, the sentiments of those who did their duty to the Public, and who said what they thought, that the present war was calamitous and disgraceful.—And what was our prospect at this moment? The minister said, that in some sense, this was our last stake. What did he mean by that? Had he the same object now in view, as he professed to have at the commencement of the war? Would he now seriously tell the House, that he had any hope of effecting a counter-revolution in France? was not that object lost for ever? was it not given up by every power in Europe, but that of Great Britain? Had not every one of them virtually, by their actions, acknowledged the French government; while we stood alone, vainly and foolishly attempting to prevent it, by which we had brought ourselves to the verge of ruin? He remembered in what manner the minister, some time ago, used to answer objections that were made to his administration: He affected, with a manner half modest and half assuming, to say, that with all defects, the country was in a prosperous condition. Little merit as there might be in such a declaration, when urged by way of argument, yet it taught us to reflect on our condition now, and to make us feel,

that if any merit of the minister had brought us to a state of prosperity, there must be some fault in the same person who had brought us to the verge of ruin. During the calamities of the American war, he thought them great; but now, when he compared them with the calamities of this war, they sunk into trifles.

He then said, that ministers were to blame, that appeared to be the general opinion; and the removal of Lord George Sackville and Lord Sandwich was agitated: Something of this kind was the case with regard to the late First Lord of the Admiralty, but not so with respect to the Minister at War; on the contrary, a third Secretary of State was appointed, seemingly for the purpose of keeping the conduct of the war in the hands in which it was placed before; and to the same hands which managed the last glorious campaign, were to be trusted the care of the next; and what were the people of this country to expect from all this? The ministers themselves, or their friends, continually told us, that the British arms have been well conducted; if so, our hopes must be at an end; for, with all the advantage of such good conduct, the result to us had been calamity and disgrace. By whose fault we had been brought into this situation, was not a matter of the same importance as the question of—What means we should pursue in future? He, for one, was ready to declare that all the blame appeared to him to be applicable to ministers; and he was of opinion, that imputing the blame to them was, in general, the proper way: For, if ministers were accused, and some general or any other officer was to blame in the conduct of the war, it was an easy thing for ministers to say so, and to prove it; but if, with brave troops, good generals, faithful allies, and good conduct, this was our situation, nothing could be our prospect, in the prosecution of the war, but complete despair. Remember the expedition of Lord Moira! Remember how the expedition to the West Indies was crippled! Remember the retreat from Toulon!—and then let any man say, whether the war has been properly conducted.

He next took notice of the situation of our troops in Holland. Whether the Dutch entered into negotiation with the French with or without our knowledge, was a matter, he said, that must be explained hereafter; but when we knew it, it was the duty of ministers to take care, that the British troops should not be left in a situation where they might be sacrificed; the best thing that could be done, in that case, was to give the army as good winter-quarters as could be provided, and as speedily as possible bring it back to England.

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With regard to the effect of the proposed vote, he was one of those who were willing to assent to it if necessary, provided that could be done without crippling the navy; but, as it possibly might have that effect, the better way would be to inquire into that fact previously; and therefore he should support the motion of his Hon. Friend, that the Chairman should leave the Chair, report progress, and ask leave to sit again. The minister was sanguine as to the power of this country to raise money, and, Mr. Fox said, he was so likewise; but the greatest difficulty he had was about raising the men, and he was well assured that the great bounty which was given to volunteers in the army had a bad effect on the service of the navy. The instance which had been adduced by his Hon. Friend, and which was by no means a solitary one, shewed how much more difficult it was to procure the former. It demonstrated the impolicy of ministers hiring foreign troops, in giving 200,000 l. to Prussia, and now 6,000,000 l. to Austria, when British blood was so far from being spared by this immense expenditure, that scarcely a man was to be had on any terms.

Mr. Fox declared, he was sorry to be compelled to say, that on comparing the preparations for this with preparations for other wars, the army had in this much more than its due proportion, when examined with the navy, and judged of in that way, and there never was a war when the exertions of this country should be so much directed to the navy, as the present war. What was every man to conclude from the vote that was proposed that night, but that we were going to send thousands of British troops out of this country to be slaughtered in Germany, or imprisoned in France? Had not that been the case, this campaign? He had no intelligence except what the Gazettes afforded; by looking at them, he found the loss of the British troops to be dreadful. He hoped that no more of them were to go to the Continent, for, of the two, if there must be either, he would rather that English money should be squandered, than that English men should be slaughtered.

If our English troops are not to be sent again to the Continent, where is the necessity of such an increase in the establishment? And if they are to be sent there, what secret charm, what visionary scheme, induces us to send them to a place, from whence we never can indulge a hope of seeing them return?

Is there any Gentleman to come forward with some new idea of marching to Paris? and are we again to be told what fortified towns there are to conquer, and how the modes of



conquest are to be enforced? We have heroes that are greater than the greatest heroes in history or romance; but unfortunately their means were inadequate to their undertakings.

Mr. Fox took a short view of the conduct of Administration since the commencement of the war, and maintained that they had pursued many measures which were highly injurious to the interests of this country, and omitted others by which we should have been highly benefited. Have they stated how it happened that we have been so repeatedly unsuccessful?—Has it been for want of force enough? When the French made an impression to the Westward, Lord Moira was never sent to assist our troops till the last. The siege of Ypres too was similar. And after all this, was it not more than a British House of Commons ought to bear, that a mighty army was to be put under the direction of men who had gone so far towards the ruin of their country, and who would not give as much as an account of their conduct. What, he would ask again, did the minister mean by an affected sneer, that it was the fashion to call this a disgraceful war? Would he attempt to deny that assertion? Would he say it was not disastrous, calamitous, and disgraceful? Would he compare it with any other in which this country had ever been engaged? Would he compare the events of it with those of any other war? Man by man, guinea by guinea, town by town, lost; army by army defeated!

Mr. Fox entered into an enumeration of the losses of Valenciennes, Condé, and the various other places, until he came to the fate of Holland, in all which he saw nothing on the part of our Administration but arrogance and incapacity.—Were not Valenciennes and Condé, with the most stupid and belottéd ignorance, left only to a garrison of Emigrants, who were all thus shamefully betrayed to death and butchery?—What such ministers do not like to hear as accusation, they must urge as their defence when the time comes, and the time will come when they must offer retribution. This might appear to be strong language, but it was the language that was suited to the occasion. Those must be supposed to feel deeply who have suffered. He knew that present misfortunes always appeared greater than those which were seen in distant perspective. He did not wish to say any thing of himself, but he had no doubt, that if his counsel had been followed even a long time after the war began, we might have saved Holland. Was he to be told that it was the fashion to call this a disgraceful war? It was the fashion with him to say what he knew, and it ought to be the fashion with the people to express what they felt.

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With respect to the finance and resources of this country, he admitted them to be high, but he desired it to be remembered also, that the debt which we already owed was extremely great; and if we proceeded much further in this ruinous war, it might come to be a question, What were the resources by which we might pay off the interest of our debt, and support the government? The Right Hon. Gentleman had dwelt much on our resources, but he appears not to have weighed the pressure of the taxes which were to be imposed in the present year, and which must be laid on in the next, even if a peace was immediately to be concluded. If the present was not the last, it was certainly an approach to our last stake. This war had deeply affected even our resources already: It had affected our manufactures in a very considerable degree; if the minister doubted it, a Right Hon. Gentleman near him (Mr. Windham) would give him some information from his constituents, upon that subject; but if that was the case with regard to our own manufactures, before we lost Holland as an ally and a customer, what was to be the case after Holland was put into the hands of the French? He had heard it said that the credit of the two countries was intertwisted: That in particular the Bank of England, and the Bank of Amsterdam, were, in point of concern to us, one and the same thing: This was the language held out in order to get us into this war; he admitted it was not used by the ministers, but they all suffered it to have its weight at the time it was uttered,—they said nothing to shew the fallacy of it. If, on the other hand, there be no fallacy in it, what was the situation of Amsterdam, and consequently the situation of this country, at this very moment? He was sure he did not know; and he was afraid the minister did not know. The arrival of the family of the Prince of Orange, was a melancholy prognostic of the fate of Holland. He was afraid, too, that the Dutch would be of opinion that our benign friendship, our great good-will, had ruined them. Indeed there was too much reason to suspect that this was true, with regard to the Dutch; but, as to ourselves, we were in a singular situation; we were the only power in Europe who refused to acknowledge the present government of France; all the others had virtually done so. We were now about to persuade the Emperor, by means of six millions of money, to pretend to change his opinion upon that subject, after having given up the contention respecting it as Archduke of Austria and King of Bohemia, after we had tried others in vain upon the same occasion. Good God! that a minister, who had brought us into this calamitous and disgraceful situation, should come to the

House of Commons, and expect confidence as to his future operations ! Still more deplorable it was, that there should be a House of Commons who would bear it : In this there appeared to him to be something sadly inauspicious and alarmingly ominous. The duty of the minister was to come to that House, and to express himself only in tones of sorrow and contrition; and the duty of the House, in his opinion, after what they heard from the minister, was to express their indignation at his arrogance. He concluded with declaring, that he should not have entered so much into the various points he had insisted on that night, if the minister had not by his manner of discussing this question treated that House, and the people of this country, with so much contempt; for what was it but contempt to treat with levity, complaints against a war, the most calamitous in which this country was ever engaged?

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, the Committee would not be surprised, if he solicited attention for a few minutes. The Right Hon. Gentleman who had just sat down, had, in every part of his speech, most completely misrepresented him, and, in many instances, in a manner so gross and palpable, that it must have been obvious to every Gentleman in the House. In order to detect these various misrepresentations, it would be necessary to follow the Right Hon. Gentleman almost through the whole of his speech; and when they were once taken away, all the charges so triumphantly advanced would sink to the ground. In the first place, the Right Hon. Gentleman charged him with having called for the confidence of the House, as a preparatory step to their granting the supplies that had been moved for—Not one word that could be tortured into such a meaning, had dropt from him during the debate. It was the exigencies of the State that called for these extraordinary supplies; it was upon the estimates laid upon the table that the House were to found their vote, and not upon any unusual confidence in ministers. Whether or no the House acted wisely in placing, not a blind and unlimited, but a just and constitutional confidence in ministers, would be manifested by the event.

But what was the confidence which he had expressed, and which he had called upon the House to feel? It was a confidence that, in a contest so momentous as the present, all the innate spirit and vigour of this country would burst forth into action. It was a confidence in the firmness, the zeal, and ardour of the people, in the skill, in the courage, in the perseverance of our armies and of our fleets. It was a confidence in the industry, in the manufactures, in the commerce, in the in-creasing

creasing resources of this country—resources, not diminished by war, but which seem to increase in proportion to our necessities. It was a confidence founded upon the credit of this country, unimpaired by war, superior to temporary attacks, and fully able to sustain a loan as large as the necessities of the state had called for. It was upon these general grounds combined that he had expressed his confidence, and surely they were sufficient to inspire it. If to place reliance upon such grounds as these, was folly—if to proclaim that reliance was arrogance, of both he was guilty. He trusted that all the attempts of the Right Hon. Gentleman to deceive the House in that respect would be vain. He stated under a general proposition under the title of confidence, what was applicable in a qualified sense to particular considerations, and had nothing to do with any confidence which any minister might think fit to ask, or any Parliament should think wise to grant; it was not an attempt which any person feeling manfully on the subject would be induced to make, and was unworthy of the Right Hon. Gentleman who made it, and could be consistent only with a disposition to damp the ardour and to fetter the exertions of the people of this country. This was the more extraordinary, as that Gentleman had already pledged himself to a declaration in that House, that the greatest exertions are necessary at this time on the part of this country. But when he had exposed all the Right Hon. Gentleman's misrepresentations, he would leave it to the House to determine to whom the charge of arrogance was most applicable.

The Right Hon. Gentleman had next charged him with levity, in speaking of the events of the war: Whether he had talked lightly of them or not, he submitted to the recollection of the House; and to the same tribunal he would leave it to decide whether, in treating of the misfortunes of the war, the Right Hon. Gentleman, speaking in a tone of exultation, coupled with an affected lamentation, had or had not displayed a degree of triumph which the detail of our misfortunes was but ill calculated to inspire. But in what manner had he treated them with levity? Had he attempted to conceal or to deny any part of our ill success? On the contrary, he had, in the most explicit terms, acknowledged our want of success in various particulars. But what followed from those temporary calamities—that we should give up the contest in despair; that we should humble ourselves before the enemy of mankind? No, it should induce the people to redouble their energy, and to call forth all their force in defence of their country. He was ready to admit that the situation of the country at present was such as created in his mind a reasonable degree of

alarm, but it was an alarm rather at possible than at probable events. It was an alarm such as every man must feel when engaged in a doubtful contest; but it was a feeling very different indeed from dismay or despair, with which neither the exaggerated successes of the enemy, nor the pressure of temporary misfortune, could inspire him.

The Right Hon. Gentleman had then proceeded to charge him with having said that it was a fashion to call this war, disastrous. It was true he had used that expression. It was a fashion with a set of people in this country, to represent every event which happened as a misfortune to us. But the Right Hon. Gentleman had gone farther, and besides terming the war unfortunate, he had called it disgraceful. And Gentlemen on the other side charged ministers with the whole of the disgrace, and with being the authors of all the calamity that has hitherto attended it, and then desired them to put as much blame as they were able on the generals who commanded the troops.

This, as far as it was a matter of advice, he did not thank the Hon. Gentleman for, and was what he would not follow. That we had in many instances failed, he had already admitted; but that in any one instance we had incurred disgrace, he positively denied. Whatever might be the event of this war, whether favourable to England or not, the skill and bravery of her forces by sea and land, would shine in the page of history; they had even added to their former character. In fact our army never stood higher in point of military glory, for skill, valour, and perseverance, and, until lately, they had been successful in every instance. He wished to ask, whether this war had been so uniformly unfortunate as it was the fashion to represent it. Look to the naval war, does that afford matter of despair? Look to the war out of Europe, has that been uniformly unfortunate?—In both we have the most solid ground of exultation. Look at the pecuniary resources, at the credit, at the commerce of the country, and the balance is infinitely in our favour.—These were the reasons why he had complained of that fashion of dwelling with a kind of malignant satisfaction upon the calamities of the country, and applying the coarse epithet “disgraceful” to the war. It was not his intention to enter in detail into all the operations of our forces last campaign, as that was not exactly the proper time for such investigation. It was true, that when the House was considering the army estimates, it was not irregular to animadvert upon the operations of the army. Indeed, there were few points brought under the consideration of the House, in which Gentlemen might not, if they thought proper, find an

an opportunity of throwing out invectives against ministers—But if he were even to go the length of admitting that every assertion of the Right Hon. Gentleman was founded in fact, and that all his inferences were justly and correctly drawn from those facts, still, as far as related to the question then before the House, his arguments had no kind of application to it. If the Right Hon. Gentleman was really serious in thinking that the ministers were so stupid, so utterly incapable of conducting the affairs of this nation, as he had represented—if it was true, that every failure which we have experienced during the war, was attributable solely to ministers—if all this was true, what followed? To refuse the necessary supplies, and that we were to have no army; for that was the question before the House. If the House should be convinced that ministers had acted improvidently and negligently, did it therefore follow that all our exertions should stop, and that we should throw ourselves upon the mercy of our enemy?

He believed, however, that the object of the Right Hon. Gentleman was extremely different—but perhaps he felt a degree of delicacy in stating it. He would relieve his delicacy, and state it for him. His purpose, in endeavouring thus to overwhelm ministers with charges, was to displace them—this was his grand object; but the Right Hon. Gentleman need not have felt so much delicacy upon this subject. If he could prove, to the satisfaction of the House, that those who were now in his Majesty's councils are utterly incapable of directing the affairs of this country, let him do it. Let him propose an address to the Throne, praying his Majesty to dismiss his present servants, as being wholly unfit for their situation. His Majesty, upon such an address, would certainly comply with its request; but even then the purpose of the Hon. Gentleman would not be answered, for he could not succeed to office unless he was able to convince that House—unless he was able to satisfy the people of England—that the more powerful, and consequently the more dangerous the enemy became, the less we should prepare to resist them—that the more their resources increased, the more we should decrease ours—that the moment when the enemy was flushed with the insolence of conquest, was precisely the moment in which we should sue for peace: Unless the Right Hon. Gentleman could satisfy the House and the country of all these facts, he would derive no benefit by driving the present Administration from their places, for he would not succeed them. If, on the other hand, he could do so, then his attack on ministers ought to come in a shape different from what it had at present; and if such an attack was to come at all, it might as well come from that Right

Hon. Gentleman as any other Member of Parliament.—But what were the points of proof of the deficiency in the Administration? And what were the charges which had been brought against ministers by the Right Hon. Gentleman, and by the Hon. Officer who preceded him? The first subject of charge was relative to the expedition undertaken by Sir Charles Grey and Sir John Jervis to the West Indies.

It was said, that the forces allotted to that expedition were not adequate to the difficulty of the undertaking; and it was also stated, that 10,000 men were promised, but that part of the troops destined for that service had been stolen from the officer who commanded that expedition. This mode of reasoning was as curious as it was new. It was founded upon a supposition, that whenever a body of troops were put under the command of an officer for any particular purpose, they became, as it were, the property of that officer; and if the exigency of affairs should induce the Executive Government to employ a part of those troops in another service, then the troops so taken are to be considered as stolen from the officer under whom they were originally placed. It was certainly true, that a part of the troops originally intended for the West Indies, had been withdrawn, for the purpose of an expedition, which, from the posture of affairs at that time, was likely soon to take place, and which, if it could have been carried into effect, would, in all probability, have been attended with very beneficial consequences: He meant the expedition which was then in agitation against the coast of France.—That expedition did not take place, from circumstances which ministers could neither foresee nor prevent—Men could not command events; they could only judge from probabilities, and act according to the dictates of their reason.

But when ministers were accused for sending a force to the West Indies utterly inadequate to the object, Gentlemen should recollect what was the result of that expedition. It succeeded in every part. The force employed had consequently been decided to have been adequate to the service, as every thing had been done which had at any time been in contemplation of Government. He did not wish to detract from the merit of the officers who commanded upon that occasion; he was convinced that it was to their superior skill and indefatigable perseverance that the conquests were in a great degree to be attributed; they had done signal services to their country, and had acquired the utmost honour for themselves. All he asked of the candour of Gentlemen was, that when an expedition had been so completely successful, they would not accuse ministers of having sent an insufficient force, when it

was

was undeniable that the force sent had achieved its object. With respect to the other charge, of not having taken any measures to send out succours to those islands—here again, he contended, ministers were not entitled to blame; every possible exertion had been made to send out supplies to the West Indies; they had in some instances been retarded, but from causes which could not be prevented. The Right Hon. Gentleman then adverted to the campaign in Flanders, and endeavoured, with much ingenuity, to place Administration in a dilemma; but there was more ingenuity than justice in the argument, there not having been any mismanagement in the Administration, nor in the officers or troops; the losses which we had met with arose from a chain of concurring causes and unavoidable accidents, each depending upon its own nice and particular nature, but which were neither to be avoided nor foreseen, many of them such as could not reasonably be conjectured before they happened; the highest degree of probability being, that the events would have happened the other way; and to impute them to Administration was just as wise as to impute to them the present severe frost. The Hon. Gentleman first of all supposes that all our allies have, in every instance, acted up to their engagements and to our expectations; he supposes that in every one of the operations upon the continent there was the most perfect unanimity, that every one of the generals conducted themselves in a way to set military criticism at defiance. Then, says the Right Hon. Gentleman, triumphantly, if with such exertions as these you have failed, how can you hope to be more successful in future?

The Right Hon. Gentleman immediately turns short round, and describes the picture in the other extreme: He supposes a total want of co-operation among the allies—he supposes that all the plans on the continent have been undertaken without judgment, and conducted without energy; and then he asks what reason we have to expect that our exertions will be more ably or more effectually conducted in future? If either of the positions of the Hon. Gentleman was justified by the fact, there might be some difficulty in denying his inferences—But it seemed never to occur to him that there was a medium between the two extremes, which came to the real truth of the case. There certainly was much to lament, something to censure, but nothing to deprive us of hope. That some of our allies had not in every particular answered our expectations, he was ready to admit now—he had never denied it—perhaps some of our allies, the most nearly connected with us in point of interest, are the most liable to this observation. But the hour when that unhappy people were exposed to every calamity



larmity to which the success of a furious enemy could make them liable, was not the proper time for complaint—His object was not to accuse the fallen, but to shew that the charges advanced against the Government were without foundation.

It was not sufficient, in order to attach guilt upon ministers, to shew that the allies were unfortunate in Flanders, or that Holland had fallen a sacrifice to the enemy; it must be proved that it was owing to the want of attention, to the breach of faith, or to the supineness of the English Government. In what one of these particulars could any charge be made? Did not England adhere scrupulously to her treaties? Did she not act vigorously in the common cause? Did she not encourage the allies by her example, as well as by exhortation? Throughout the whole war, the faith and honour of England had been kept inviolate.

He had been accused of speaking with levity upon the subject of the war; he felt for the misfortunes of his country, as a man and as an Englishman, but he could take no shame to himself, for misfortunes which he had done every thing in his power to prevent, nor pretend to feel contrition where there was no real cause for repentance.

The next ground of charge chosen by the Right Hon. Gentleman was rather of a singular nature; he stated it as a matter of accusation against his Majesty's ministers, that the English army had not been withdrawn from the continent sooner.—But surely the Right Hon. Gentleman could not be serious in this part of his charge, or did he mean that as a specimen of the manner in which he would treat an ally? Would it have been consistent with that good faith, which it is the boast of England always to have kept, to have abandoned our allies on the approach of danger? Would the Right Hon. Gentleman have advised us to have withdrawn our forces, while the frontier was defensible? "But (says the Right Hon. Gentleman), when you found the Dutch were negotiating for a peace, you might have secured the retreat of your army." Sir, said the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if we wished them to obtain an honourable peace, should we have taken the proper steps to obtain it for them by withdrawing our army, and leaving them to the *tender mercies* of the French? It was to her ill-judged confidence in the faith of France, that Holland might in some degree attribute her destruction: On that faith it was that the people of England were recommended by the Hon. Gentleman and his friends to place implicit reliance. Were these the principles upon which the Hon. Gentleman would come into Administration? would he lay it down that we should withdraw our support from our allies the moment our assistance became critically

cally necessary? would he negotiate a peace with France for this country, as he seems to think it to have been negotiated for Holland, by throwing ourselves entirely on the mercy of the enemy, and commencing the negotiation, by depriving ourselves of the means of resistance? Was there any alternative as to the conduct this country was to have adopted, with regard to Holland, provided it was understood as a fixed principle, that the faith of England ought never to be violated? Or would the Hon. Gentleman undertake to point out the precise moment at which the danger of our ally became so imminent that we should be justified in considering our contracts as dissolved? It could not be supposed that he was indifferent as to the fate of the gallant army on the continent; their conduct was above all the feeble praise he could give it; their exertions in the defence of Holland had exceeded even the most illustrious examples; and he felt infinite satisfaction in the hope they were now in a place of safety and of comparative rest. In the general anxiety of the Hon. Gentleman to censure ministers, every public calamity is attributed to them; even the severity of the season is brought forward as a crime against them. But he would venture to assert, without the fear of being contradicted by any military man, that, had not the hand of God rendered the season so uncommonly severe, the force employed by England to defend Holland would have been found adequate to the purpose.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer said, he had avoided entering at large into any of the various topics which he had touched in the course of his reply, because the time would come when they might be more properly investigated; he had been led to take this general view of the question, to shew the total want of foundation in the charge brought against Administration.

*Mr. Fox* said, that it was necessary for him, after what they had just heard, to enter into some explanation of what he had formerly spoken, at least upon one or two points. The Hon. Gentleman seemed hurt that he should have used such an expression as "the tender mercy" of the French; and, with all that degree of misrepresentation of which he so much complained, had perverted it into a meaning which had never entered into his mind. What he meant by it only respected the conduct of that country, and the measures they had taken with regard to the Royalists and insurgents in La Vendée. Whether there was most misrepresentation in what he had said, or in what fell from the Hon. Gentleman, he would leave the impression upon that subject entirely to the House, who had so many opportunities

tunities of knowing how much he was inclined to misrepresent objects of discussion there or otherwise.

In another material point, the Right Hon. Gentleman had with equal grossness misrepresented him: Nothing could certainly be a greater perversion of meaning than the manner in which the Hon. Gentleman had explained the use he had made of the terms calamitous, disastrous, and disgraceful, as applied to the war: With regard to the two first, he believed there was nobody in or out of that House could deny that they were applicable to the whole of the war, from its first beginning and continuance, down to the present moment; and as to the word disgrace, he had no hesitation in declaring that he meant to apply it solely to the conduct of Administration, and could not for a moment let it be supposed, as the Hon. Gentleman had insinuated, that he had the most distant idea of attaching it to the merits, the characters, or the conduct of either the generals, the officers, or the men, who had been so dreadfully employed in those scenes of disappointment, disaster, and calamity, which notwithstanding their best exertions, and great and gallant these exertions undoubtedly were, had uniformly attended the execution of every one of the miserable plans which Administration had adopted for the prosecution of their favourite, though ruinous war. As to the merits of the officers and men, it had often been his happiness to have the honour of paying the tributes of praise and admiration so justly due to their valour, gallantry, and exertions; and though it might be thought in some degree pride and vanity in him to say it, there certainly was one reason, which, independent of all others, must induce him to be partial to their conduct—he was nearly related to many who had been the most active and in the most arduous situations in this war, and with others he was so much connected by the ties of friendship and good wishes, that he certainly would derive no honour or satisfaction by publishing their disgrace, even if any, which he would not allow to be the case, had fallen to their share. The more the ministers enlarged upon the skill and courage of the army, the more they convicted themselves; for it was one of the charges which he brought against them, that their stupidity was so inveterate, that their ignorance was so incurable, that all the exertions of the army and the navy could not counteract the baleful effects of their want of capacity. It was to ministers only, therefore, that he attached those severe but justly-earned epithets; they had fully shewn their imbecility, by plunging the country into the war, and their incapacity ever since to conduct it—a war which was, so far as the events had shewn, on their part, to be called the most calamitous, disastrous,

disastrous, and disgraceful war that this country had ever seen.

As to the Hon. Gentleman's observations about the country not being at its last stake as to resources, he would only say, that whatever the country might now be disposed to feel on that head, it was very plain that the Hon. Gentleman, from his words and conduct, was near being at an end; if not at the last stake, of his resources. The Hon. Gentleman called upon him to move an Address to his Majesty to dismiss his ministers but that motion, from whatever quarter it might properly come depended more on time, and to be called for by circumstances, than by the haughty suggestions of the Hon. Gentleman. "The experience I have had," said Mr. Fox, "of the fate of Addresses of a similar nature formerly, would not make me very sanguine in my expectations of one at present; but perhaps those Gentlemen who have lately joined ministers, have carried at least some of their principles into the Cabinet with them, and the vote of the House of Commons will not longer be treated with indifference." Whether there would be policy in bringing forward such a motion at this time, he was not to argue, but at this juncture it became his duty, and that of the House, to call upon ministers for an explanation of their conduct, before they voted six millions more of their constituents' money into hands that had proved themselves so miserably and completely incompetent to the conduct of the war, and so utterly unfit in every respect for the trust and confidence so repeatedly claimed on their part and reposed in them. As a Member of Parliament he had a right to fix blame upon ministers, and to call upon them at least for explanation. One thing, indeed, he was glad to hear from the Hon. Gentleman, and that was, that when that House should think fit to address the King to dismiss his present ministers, the Hon. Gentleman would be ready to comply with their wishes. His happiness at such a removal he might fairly state, without the least idea of being suspected that he wished to become his successor, in such a situation as his misconduct had placed the country; for nobody could think him so old, so completely in dotage, as to envy such a minister in so involved and deplorable a dilemma as the Hon. Gentleman must feel himself to be; he never could be of so vicious a taste. And there were those now connected with the Administration, as well as many others in that House, who knew well enough that an exorbitant love of place could never be attributed to him. Thus much he would say, but he had no wish to dissemble or disguise his sentiments; if the people without doors, or that House, wished for negotiation, and if nobody more able, though many there were, would come forward, in

obedience to that wish, arduous as the task was, he would accept of it, and exert the best of his judgment, wisdom, and experience, to promote the object in view, to restore the happiness of the country, and secure its honour and dignity upon the best terms that could be obtained. He then entered upon the past and present state of Holland, and its relative connexion with this country, leaving, as questions for future discussion, how far we had kept our good faith with them, or how much they had deserved the assistance that we had forced upon them. When he had stated fairly the disasters of the war, the Hon. Gentleman talked of his exultation in the misfortunes of the country. This was no new strain of declamation: It was used by ministers in all wars, and particularly addressed to him during the American war. It was ridiculous to talk of prophecies, or to pretend to be a prophet; but in that House he was a counsellor, and had a right to advise, which right would amount to nothing, if he were not permitted to state what common sense, common foresight, and a moderate degree of wisdom, pointed out as circumstances that must follow from particular conduct at the time. He believed that Holland might have been with ease preserved, if we had shewn a disposition to negotiate at the beginning of the war. Though he was not one of those visionaries who believed it possible to establish universal peace, and though he had prepossessions in favour of continental connexions, yet, he thought it was an honour to have been in the minority on the question of war, not only on this but many other occasions. He had as good an opinion of the resources of this country, as the Hon. Gentleman; neither had he any wish to make the country despised, bad as our situation was; he only wished the people to see that situation actually as it was, and then judge for themselves, who were most their real friends, those who informed them of the truth, or those who deluded them by artful and dangerous concealment. He repeated that he had never been a friend to wars: It was well known, that he had always opposed the American war, and this war in every stage of it. Indeed it had been the good fortune of his life, never to agree to any of those measures which had brought upon the country that accumulated mass of debts, taxes, and grievous burdens, under which we labour; for this he had the consolation of having done his duty according to his own conscience; and for all other sort of approbation, he left it to the country to do him whatever justice he was thought to merit. Mr. Fox concluded his reply by stating that the question for the consideration of the House was, whether they would defer the Estimates of the army, until they were assured that they could augment the navy effectually: Upon that point he entirely agreed

agreed with his Hon. Friend (Mr. Huffey), thinking as he did, that the salvation of the country depended upon its navy.

*Mr. Morris Robinson* said, so great a friend was he to the extension of the naval force of the country, that he thought it ought to take place at this time in preference entirely to that of the army; and as a friend to the minister, he would advise him not to bring forward the Imperial loan, which he thought would tend to continue continental connexions, from which, at this time, we should rather extricate ourselves.

*Mr. Huffey's* motion was then put, and negatived without a division.

*Mr. Fox* wished to be informed by ministers, whether his information was correct, which led him to believe that great inattention and neglect had prevailed in our hospitals; if this was so, it was a very serious grievance, and demanded immediate consideration. He might perhaps be answered on this point, that they were under better management than those of our allies; but what he wanted to know was, whether they were in the state in which they ought to be.

*Mr. Secretary at War* candidly acknowledged that his information led him to think with the Right Hon. Gentleman, that there had been inattention and much consequent distress in the case of the sick and wounded, but there being so many different causes to which this might be ascribed, he could not positively lay the blame to any particular department. From what he had seen and known on this subject, it was his earnest wish that every investigation might take place, which could tend to obviate those grounds of complaint which had hitherto prevailed, and regulate the management of the hospitals properly in future.

*Mr. Jekyl* said, that he had heard repeated complaints made of the want of medical aid in our hospitals. He had also learned, that port wine, to the amount of 36,000l. had been exported to the continent for the use of the hospitals. He believed a precedent was to be found in the Journals, where, in 1761, a motion was made, that an account should be laid before the House, of the amount and the quantity of medicines exported for the use of our countrymen, for the purpose of instituting an inquiry. He therefore gave notice, that he would avail himself of this precedent, and make at a future day a similar motion.

*The Secretary at War* replied, and assured the Hon. Gentleman that it was his wish to give the fullest information he could obtain relative to that subject.

*General Fitzpatrick* remarked, that as no mention had been made in the Army Estimates of the number of Emigrants taken

into British pay, he should at another period make a motion on the subject.

The original motion was then put and carried; the remainder of the resolutions were severally voted, and, the House being resumed, were ordered to be reported the next day.

*Alderman Curtis*, in apology for his not answering on Tuesday to the call of the House, stated his necessary attendance on some momentous business in the City on the same day, and requested that the order, relative to the defaulters attending in their places on Friday next, might be set aside in respect to him, if he should attend the House to-morrow.

*Alderman Anderson* made the same request.—Agreed to. Adjourned.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THURSDAY, Jan. 22.

The votes of the Committee of Supply on Wednesday were reported and agreed to, viz.

£.	s.	d.	
2,777,534	19	1	For guards and garrisons.
691,307	15	7	For forces in the plantations.
115,820	0	3	For general and staff officers, &c.
40,096	9	9	For difference between the pay of British and Irish establishments.
135	16	8	For allowance to reduced horse guards.
8,323	17	10½	For troops in the East Indies.
385,000	0	0	For recruiting land forces, and contingencies, &c.
480,000	0	0	Levy money, &c. for augmentations to the forces.
79,978	4	4	Full pay to supernumerary officers of his Majesty's land forces and marines.
1,000	0	0	To ditto of the Scotch brigade.
52,500	0	0	To ditto of his Majesty's American forces.
7,500	0	0	For allowance to ditto.
10,187	13	3	For widows' pensions.
4,500	0	0	For Scotch roads and bridges.
930,047	12	3	For embodied militia and fencible infantry.
210,000	0	0	For contingencies, &c. for ditto.
107,137	11	6	For clothing for the militia.
280,048	8	3	For fencible cavalry.
80,000	0	0	For allowances of bread and necessaries for ditto.
334,155	1	9	For expences of land service and ordnance, not provided for in 1793.

25,375	14	5	For expence of sea service and ordnance, for the year 1793.
1,045,305	19	8	For expence of ordnance and land service in 1794.
39,307	0	3	For expence of ordnance and sea service in 1794.
3,176,804	17	9	For charge of ordnance and land service for 1795.
997,226	0	0	For the estimate of the charge of foreign troops in the pay of Great Britain for 1795.

*Mr. Wigley* moved, that as *Mr. Alderman Curtis* was in his place, the order of the day for his attendance the next day be discharged.

*Mr. Sheridan* said, he was glad to see the Members for the City of London attending their duty in the House at so early an hour; but it was a little awkward to see the motion for excusing one absentee, seconded by another, for the Gentlemen of the City of London were absent when the House was called over; he did not mean to blame them for it, for he believed they were attending their duty in the City at the time; nor did he mean to say any thing against their having leave of absence from the House next day, for he understood they would have important business on their hands next day in the City, and he hoped they would employ their abilities in convincing their constituents of the necessity of their exerting themselves to put an end to this calamitous war.

The question was then stated from the Chair, and carried.

The same motion was made on behalf of *Mr. Alderman Anderson*, *Sir James Sanderson*, *Mr. Alderman Le Mesurier*, *Sir Watkin Lewes*, and *Mr. Alderman Newnham*, as also for *Lord Hinchinbroke*, *Sir Benjamin Hammett*, and *Mr. Pelham*; which was agreed to.

#### PETITION AGAINST THE WAR.

*Mr. Curwen* presented a petition on behalf of the freemen of Carlisle, complaining of the hardships which were brought upon them by the present war, and praying that the House would adopt such measures as might as speedily as possible restore the blessings of peace, so essentially necessary for the security and happiness of this country.

The petition being read, *Mr. Curwen* moved that it be laid on the table.

*Lord Morpeth* said, he held in his hand what he feared the rules of the House would not permit to be laid on the table; it was not, properly speaking, a petition, although it partook of the nature of one, for it expressed the sentiments of fourteen hundred persons, inhabitants of Carlisle; it protested against, and



and expressed sentiments opposite to those which were contained in the petition proposed to be laid on the table. The persons whose signatures this protest bore, were, to his knowledge, many of them, of the first respectability in that part of the country, manufacturers, and gentlemen of great landed property. They gave a public testimony of attachment to his Majesty and the other branches of the Legislature, and to the constitution, as now happily established; they thought it improper to apply at this time to Parliament for peace, as it might tend to clog the wheels of Government; and they expressed a perfect reliance on the wisdom of the Legislature for procuring, at a due season, the blessings of an honourable, safe, and lasting peace.

*Mr. Curwen* said, in reply, that the protest of which the Noble Lord had so candidly given a general statement, contained the sentiments, perhaps, of some Gentlemen in the neighbourhood of Carlisle, which they stated in a general way; however that might be, he felt it his duty to say, that the petition which he had presented conveyed the real sense of the freemen of Carlisle, whose names appeared to it. They were honest respectable men, and he should be ashamed to present their petition, if he thought otherwise. The petition was agreed to, in consequence of a public meeting which was held at the place. They were men who were unbiassed, and entirely unattached to any party: And so general was the sentiment among them for peace, that out of all those who attended the meeting, four only dissented from the petition. They had no desire to clog the wheels of Government, but they wished for peace, as a blessing to be enjoyed by the country at large. Their language was, "Unite with all those who wish for peace, no matter to what party they may belong; if they are friends to peace, join them." They had been called together by a hand-bill to a public meeting, where the petition had been signed by a majority of the freemen of the city. As to the protest alluded to by the Noble Lord, he must observe, that he held a hand-bill in his hand which explained something of the nature of that protest; he was assured he might safely say, that much undue influence (of which he did not accuse the Noble Person who produced it) had been used by men of great wealth in the neighbourhood, among whom were agents of a Noble Earl and of a Right Reverend Bishop. He trusted that such practices would not be continued; if they should, there would be an end of all hope of collecting the real sentiments of the people of this country on the subject of the war.

*Mr. Wallace* observed, that the sense of the country could not be always collected in a public meeting. It was an easy thing

thing to get a petition for any thing, and desperate must be the cause indeed for which a petition could not be obtained. He said, that some time since an assertion appeared in a paper in that part of the country whence this petition came, stating that the grand jury there had resolved, if peace be not soon obtained, to petition his Majesty for it. From what authority that assertion came he knew not, but he knew it to be entirely unfounded. He believed the majority of the inhabitants to be incapable of agreeing to the petition now presented to the House. Indeed he was happy to have it in his power to deny that the county of Cumberland was of the same sentiments. So far were the inhabitants of that county from thinking that the war was not rational, that they conceived it to be essential to the existence of the constitution. The persons who called for the meeting at which the petition was determined, were only 13 : He did not mean to deny that they might be respectable men—some he knew to be so ; of the rest he knew nothing : On the contrary, there were fifty-three who called for the meeting for the protest, fourteen of whom were men of the most considerable consequence and fortune in the county, and upwards of forty were men of respectability. The petition was signed by only two hundred, while the protest was signed by thirteen or fourteen hundred. What comparison then ought to be made between the two ? or what weight given to the petition, especially when it was considered that they had strangers and even children to sign it ? One person, of the name of James Smith, was a child thirteen years old, and apprentice to a barber. He did not, however, mean to say, that peace was not generally desired there ; most sincerely it was, as it ought to be, the general desire ; but that was a desire, not for an insecure and hollow truce, but for a safe, honourable peace, consistent with the honour and the dignity of this empire.

*Mr. Fox* said, he lamented that somebody had not advised the Noble Lord who opened the nature of this protest as to the mode of making it up in a form in which the House could, consistently with its rules, receive it at the table ; for then its merits might be fully investigated in a formal way : Nothing could now be done on it but making general observations ; and in that way, he had no difficulty to say, he was perfectly clear, that, if the protest was thoroughly examined and compared with the petition, there would be found to be no essential difference between them on the only subject that came fairly, and in his opinion could come decently, before that House, namely, the opinion of the people on the main point.

point. They expressed only a difference of opinion as to the fit moment of presenting a petition. The question was put fairly, and he was glad of it, for the answer of the petitioners was consonant to his feelings: They had expressed a desire for peace at this time; so had those who signed the protest; they had also said that peace was desirable, but they left it to the wisdom of the Legislature: Both parties, therefore, agreed as to the object or the end, but differed only as to the means of attaining that end; and he was ready to say, that the House ought never to inquire into the propriety of the opinions of the people who had presented their petitions, or as to the time of presenting them; they ought to hear, at least, at all times, the petitions of their constituents: They had a right to petition when they pleased, and of that matter they were the only proper judges; of the wisdom of complying with the desire expressed, the House ought to judge. The difference then being only as to the propriety of time between the petitioners and the protestors, the fair result was, that on the subject of the war they were unanimous. Having said this, he must observe, that there did not appear to him to be any probability that there would be any difference as to the question now before the House, namely, "That this petition be laid on the table."

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* agreed that the petition was regularly before the House, and therefore no objection could be made to its being laid upon the table; but it was impossible to avoid adverting to what had been said by the Right Hon. Gentleman who had just spoken. He had said, there was no essential difference between the petitioners and the protestors in this case, on the question of peace;—that he really took to be a fair summary of his proposition. He could scarcely think that any Gentleman meant seriously to maintain such an assertion. He begged of the House to consider a little of the moment in which this petition and protest were framed. One set of persons presented a petition, desiring the House to take an immediate step for peace: The others said, they wished for peace, but thought that a petition for peace, presented under the existing circumstances of the war, was more likely to retard than accelerate the object; and therefore left it to the wisdom of the Legislature, to make peace whenever it should be consistent with the interests, welfare, and honour of the country. When did they say this?—After the Address of that and the other House of Parliament had been carried to the Throne, declaring it to be their firm determination to support his Majesty in a vigorous prosecution of the war. If  
they

they thought peace had been attainable at this moment, they would have expressed themselves to that effect; but they knew that Parliament had recently expressed its opinion to the contrary, and they relied entirely on the wisdom of Parliament to bring that about, when practicable, on prudent grounds, for which they professed themselves to entertain an anxious desire. He therefore must, under these circumstances, maintain, that between the petitioners and the protestors there was an essential difference.

*Mr. Plumer* said, he attended to the Hon. Gentleman, who had said that the petition had many signatures that were not genuine, and gave as an instance of it, the name of JAMES SMITH: He wished to know in what part of the petition the name of JAMES SMITH was to be found, as he saw no such name among the signatures.

*Mr. Wallace* said, he had not the honour of knowing the person, but it had been so stated to him.

*Mr. Plumer* said, he was very ready to submit to the authority of the Hon. Gentleman, as being much better than his eyes; but he declared, if the name of JAMES was subscribed to the petition, he could not see it there.

*Mr. Curwen* said he supposed, that by the strangers to whom the Hon. Gentleman (*Mr. Wallace*) alluded, was meant the chairman of the meeting, and a most respectable clergyman; they were two of the most independent men in the country. He would support the honour and the independence of the Gentleman who was in the chair at the meeting when the petition was agreed upon, as well as of most of the persons present: They were men whom he knew, of the most respectable characters. They were neither Bishops, Earls, Dukes, nor any who were connected with party; but they were honest men, such as he would wish to speak for in that House.

*Mr. Sheridan* said, that with regard to the question immediately before the House, he believed there was no difference of opinion; but the point of importance appeared to him to be this, whether or not it should be a *fashion* in that House (to use the minister's own phrase) to discourage all petitions whatever, if the minister did not like their tendency; and from the manner in which the minister had spoken that day, he thought he saw a good deal to that tendency. The Noble Lord who opened the business of the protest had conducted himself with great fairness and candour; he was sorry to say his example had not been imitated by the Gentleman who followed him. That Gentleman had been pleased to inform the House, that it was extremely easy to get petitions to any thing. He well knew how easy it was for Government, by their intrigues

and corrupt artifices, to defeat the objects of such petitions as any set of men should agree upon. But he had yet to learn how extremely easy it was for any honest body of men to stand forward for any good public purpose, when the hired agents of Government opposed them. From what he had heard that day he had learnt three things: First, that it was improper for constituents to instruct their representatives; and by the way an Hon. Gentleman had said he did not know the person whose name he mentioned, to be signed improperly to the petition, and if so, he must reconsider the matter with a little more modesty, before he (Mr. Sheridan) would consent to receive his assertion for proof. The second point that he learnt was, that it was clogging the wheels of Government, to make any application from the people to Parliament. The third was, that a public meeting was an extremely wrong place to collect the public opinion; and all this was countenanced by the minister, who indeed went further, for he said that the sense of the protestors, at the time of signing the protest, was not for a peace; whereas it appeared by the protest, that they expressly desired peace, only wishing that a petition should not then be presented. These three propositions being so palatable to the Administration, he should not be surprised at seeing them supported. A triumphant appeal had been made by a Right Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Pitt) to the plain sense of the House, with respect to what had fallen from his Hon. Friend (Mr. Fox), as to the difference between the petitioners and the protestors. He also should appeal to that plain sense; if the protestors had thought, as was contended, that a vigorous prosecution of the war was the only mode of obtaining a firm and permanent peace, why had they not so stated it? Why was not the proposition that the war was irrational, and likely to produce the most fatal consequences to the country, denied to the protestors? With respect to the comparison of the numbers, the Hon Gentleman would pardon him, if he was not inclined wholly to take for granted whatever was advanced on that subject. That Gentleman had shewn that he was not sufficiently careful to guard against mistakes with respect to the petition; he could not therefore expect there should be no suspicion as to his accuracy on the other side. Though that Gentleman appeared to think that the petitioners were not in general intitled to respect, yet it was not therefore clear to every one that they were not. The number had been stated to be contemptible; he should recollect that the petition purported only to be signed by free-men; whereas the other was signed by various descriptions of persons. It was curious to observe, that the protestors should presume to tell those men who were constituents, that it was improper

improper for them to instruct their representatives; when they themselves had done a similar thing, though not the constituents of the persons whom they addressed. One thing was evident, that they would not have thought it necessary to have framed this protest, unless they had apprehended that the example of the petitioners would be followed by the county. He had no doubt those apprehensions would be justified, whenever a meeting of the county should be called.

The petition was then read, and ordered to be laid on the table.

[In a short conversation between Mr. Whitbread and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, it was understood, that Mr. Grey's motion on the subject of negotiation with the present government of France, which stood for the next day, should come forward on Monday; and that probably the subject of the Emperor's loan would be discussed on Tuesday or Wednesday.]

Mr. Hobart brought up the report of the Committee of Supply on the army. The resolutions being read,

Mr. Fox said, he had troubled the House the preceding day upon this subject, and he had asked on former occasions when votes of supply were proposed, a question to which he had not yet received any answer; he was therefore under the necessity of repeating it. First, he must remind the House of what he said the preceding night, which was, that notwithstanding all that had been urged about our naval exertions in this war, the exertions ran, in some degree, in a different current; the land service had received a much larger portion of the exertion of Government, in comparison with the navy, in this war, than in any former one. But what was done in former wars was not so much the object now, as what ought to be done in this. The most material point for him to press upon the House, was, the difference which had taken place in the naval force, in consequence of exertions for the land service. It had been stated on a former night, that the bounty which had been given to landmen had impeded the manning of the navy. When the subject of the navy was discussed in a committee, he had made some observations upon this matter, and stated, that if this was the case, it was a mismanagement; to which an answer had been given by a Right Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Dundas), on whose account the discussion of the subject of the army had been deferred to last night, and who did not at last make much use of his attendance in the House, that whatever complaints were to be made on the subject of the army, as having interfered by its bounties and recruiting efforts with the manning of the navy, it could not be made matter of accusation

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against the First Lord of the Admiralty; but that it should be brought forward when the consideration of the army came before the House. Whether that was a false surmise or not, or, if true, whether it was the object of the ministers to persist in the same plan in future, were points which he wished to have ascertained.—Or, if they meant to adopt other modes less injurious to the service of the navy, and, if they did, what were the modes which they intended to adopt? He was told, when he mentioned this on the subject of the navy, that it belonged to the discussion of the army; and now, perhaps, as he mentioned it on the discussion of the army, he should be told it belonged to the navy. But he must blend the two services, and in questions of supply get information as well as he could: And here he must again say, that of the two, the navy was out of all proportion that could be stated, the most important to this country upon this war; indeed he never heard it doubted by any Member in that House.

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* justified the answer which had been given to the questions of the Right Hon. Gentleman on that occasion, to which he had alluded; and maintained, that nothing like a charge had been or could be made, against the First Lord of the Admiralty. If any attack was intended to be made on the manner in which the army had been recruited, he could only say, he should not shun the discussion. As to the question, "How far it is intended to persevere in the plan of recruiting the army?" he had already the satisfaction to be able to declare, that the object being in a considerable degree attained, he had no reason to suppose that the military would increase to the same degree as it did last year. But the distinction which the Right Hon. Gentleman made between the services, he never could admit: We could not proceed wisely, without great exertion, in the military as well as the naval service; and this he thought would appear on a review of the general history of this country, as well as the past declarations of the Right Hon. Gentleman himself; for that it was always the policy of this country to divert and distract the attention of the enemy, by a judicious mixture of naval and military exertion. The true interest of this country was, to make the most vigorous exertions in both services: They should go hand in hand, without crippling each other. But, in case of difficulty, the land service might be brought in aid of the naval, by turning landmen into marines; whereas, if the land-service was neglected at any time, we should, by inactivity, lose that material advantage.

*Mr. Fox* said, he had never attacked the First Lord of the Admiralty, or the board of Admiralty, in what he had said on this  
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subject; he had only called for explanation of points from the Executive Government in general; and he confessed he should be glad to hear the opinion of professional men upon this subject: What he wanted to know was, whether any exertions had been made for the army; which had impeded the manning of the navy? and if so, the fault was a great one indeed; for there never was a moment in which the navy was more to be attended to, than the present. As to the opinion which he had given, and to which the minister had alluded, that was a general opinion; but this was a particular case on which he had given his sentiments, and in which he believed he had the general concurrence of the House.

*Mr. Sheridan* said, it was agreed that Government should have all possible support from every man in that House towards the increase of the navy; but he was not very sanguine in the mode in which ministers were to proceed upon that subject. He thought that we ought to have a strong and powerful corps of marines, who might be taught in time to become sailors, and they might again be supplied by landmen; but he understood that marines were prohibited by an order from the Admiralty from going aloft, or doing any of the duty of a sailor.

Having made these and many other observations, he proceeded to ask the Secretary at War some questions:—First, Whether he intended to take any means to prevent that inhuman practice which brought so much disgrace on the service?—he meant the practice of crimping. If he did, *Mr. Sheridan* said, he would leave the matter in the hands of a person to whom it so properly belonged; if not, he must bring some proposition forward on that subject. He adverted to the dreadful state of the troops now at Plymouth, who were dying, he understood, to the number of twelve and fourteen a day; and he wished to know, whether they were intended to be sent to the West Indies? if they were, he feared there would be scarcely any of them alive to land there, for they had been kept so many months on board, that they were now entirely unfit for service. If they were to go to the West Indies, our possessions there must inevitably be lost. These troops having been embarked since August, 14 or 1500 of them were sick; this proceeded partly from want of clothing, and partly from an infectious disease on board the transports. It would be the wisest plan to land them all. They had been expected to sail ever since October last.

*The Secretary at War* replied to all the observations of *Mr. Sheridan*. He said, that the detention of the troops at Plymouth arose from circumstances which human prudence had



no means of preventing : They were detained by contrary winds, and from the apprehensions that if they sailed they might meet the enemy with a force not equal to their protection. As to their destination, that was a question which ought not to be answered. He denied their being in a state which Mr. Sheridan had represented, although they might be a good deal afflicted with illness, from unavoidable circumstances. With regard to the order of the Admiralty, with respect to marines, he knew but little of it officially ; but he believed that nothing had been done in this war, which had not been usual in every war. With regard to crimping, no man detested it more than he did ; he viewed it, as every honest man did, with horror and indignation. He had done, and he would continue to do, every thing in his power to suppress totally so detestable a practice ; and to confine every executive branch of the department he superintended, within the strict limits of honour and justice.

*Mr. Fox* alluded to what had been said on former occasions with regard to building ships of war, and declared if there was a port within this island capable of building a ship where a ship was not now building, the Executive Government had been wanting in their duty to this country. He had been told once we had more ships than we had men for. He was afraid we should hear of the converse of that proposition, and that we might soon be told we had more men than we had ships for. He must again and again impress this on ministers at this awful crisis ; as men, he hoped, might, in the moment of actual necessity, turn out, not from bounties, but from a national spirit and zeal for their country. The worst want of all, he conceived, would be want of ships.

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that there was one point admitted from all quarters, that, in the present moment, no rational means of increasing our naval and military force ought to be left unattempted ; and he was rather disposed to take the benefit of this general agreement, than to enter into the minute details started by the Hon. Gentleman (*Mr. Fox*), and which it was at all times exceedingly difficult to discuss. Great part of his argument, with respect to the necessity of increasing naval exertions, arose out of the present crisis. It could not be denied, that from the change of circumstances since last year, it had become necessary that a greater naval force should be now employed against France. But when the Hon. Gentleman carried his position so far, as to state, that there was no sacrifice of military force, which ought not to be made for the sake of increasing the navy ; he went to a length, which neither common sense nor sound policy would warrant,

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For were this position to be carried to its utmost latitude, then it would be proper entirely to disband the army; as whatever might be the calamities, which such a measure would produce, it would most certainly be the means of giving an increase to the navy. Such was the conduct of the Hon. Gentleman, in bringing forward general propositions; which his good sense afterwards obliged him to qualify. For his own part, he felt, that, at one time, the army called for an augmentation; at another time the navy, according to the exigency of circumstances. If he found the navy arrived to a certain pitch, and the army requiring an extra augmentation, he would attend to the necessities of that service which at the moment was incomplete. The best proof of the attention paid to the naval service last year was, that the increase had exceeded that of any former year of a war, as well as the brilliant and decisive victory achieved by our fleet. The change in our situation that rendered a further increase of naval force necessary, had arisen from the circumstance of our land-exertions not having been sufficient to prevent the enemy from the probable acquisition of another naval power, to the aid of their own marine.—The attempt to set the naval in opposition to the military force of the country, he must consider as the result of a short-sighted, narrow, and false policy, similar to the exploded system which had once prevailed, of making a distinction between the landed and the mercantile interest—a distinction, which the more enlightened politics of modern times had proved to be false and absurd, as the two interests were so blended, that the one might be said to depend on the other. He had however no hesitation to state, that where the naval and military exertions interfered, he conceived that in the present instance, and under the existing circumstances of the war, a preference ought to be given to the naval.

*Mr. Fox* replied, that he certainly did not mean to say, that the whole army ought to be disbanded for the sake of procuring a cabin-boy to the navy. But what he had said was, that there was no period at which greater sacrifices of military force ought to have been made for the purpose of increasing our naval exertions, than in the last, as well as the present year: And every man of common prudence might last year have foreseen, that an increase of our navy would be necessary, equally for purposes of conquest and defence.

*General Smith* said, that he thought not only that every royal dock in the kingdom, but that every merchant's dock which was of a sufficient size, ought to be employed for the purpose of building new ships for the service of the navy.

*Mr.*

*Mr. M. Robinson* said, the minister had stated what he considered as rather a curious reason for increasing our military force, namely, the probable junction of the Dutch and French fleets; he could not help thinking that the Right Hon. Gentleman testified rather a degree of coldness to whatever regarded the naval service.

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* hoped that the motion he should on a future day bring forward, would prove that charge to be unfounded.

*Mr. Sheridan* remarked, that the Secretary at War had made a distinction between things which he ought not to answer, and things which he could not answer. He had declined answering, whether the troops on board the transports were destined for the West Indies; but had afterwards stated that they had been prevented by certain winds from sailing to the place of their destination. On the subject of these troops, he could not help stating that the Hon. Gentleman discovered a very great deficiency of information; and that he should think it incumbent upon him to move for returns of those troops, and an account of their situation, &c. An inquiry into the scandalous, cruel, and criminal neglect by which these men (nine regiments) had been detained five or six months on board the transports, in a sickly and languishing state, would, he trusted, not come by itself, but form part of an investigation of the causes which had produced all the disgraces and disasters of the war. The Right Hon. Gentleman had styled the victory gained by Lord Howe decisive; upon that supposition ministers indeed had acted; but the event had since proved it to be otherwise. We had soldiers at Plymouth—he asked, why we had not sailors? He was told that the troops there had been detained partly by contrary winds, and partly from the danger of encountering the fleet of the enemy. Why had they not a sufficient convoy to protect them? If the French West India islands, which had been held out as our boasted indemnity in the present war, should fall for the want of timely succour, he should feel a right to impute their loss to the deficiency of the navy. The destination of these troops, *Mr. Sheridan* said, was one of those whimsical kind of secrets which every body knew.

*The Secretary at War*, in reply, said, that it was strangely objected that the victory of the 1st of June was not decisive; because, in consequence of the subsequent exertions of the enemy, they were enabled to fit out another fleet. With regard to his caution and secrecy, which seemed to be a matter of so much pleasantry to the Hon. Gentleman, as to the destination of the transports, he had only objected to answering,

ing, because he thought the question was of that nature and description that it ought not to have been asked. He further insisted, that it was not to be imputed to Administration that sickness had prevailed amongst the troops on board the transports; they had every supply of necessaries usual and proper on such occasions; they were not improperly crowded; and though the long confinement, from the impossibility of sailing towards their destination, unfortunately caused by the reasons already mentioned, was sufficient to create the sickness so much to be regretted, yet as they were wanted for a pressing service to their country, no blame could be justly laid to the account of ministers for keeping them on board.

*Mr. Brandling* congratulated the House and his constituents, on the declaration of the Right-Hon. Gentleman (*Mr. Pitt*) that a preference would be given to naval exertions. He trusted that the system of military operations on the continent, hitherto so ruinous, and so disgraceful in its effects, would no longer be persisted in. It was now time to study economy in our resources, and not to expend them in a quarter, where we had met with nothing but perfidy on the one hand, and counteraction on the other. We ought to shew to the enemy, that our resources were equal to carry on a war defensive by land, and offensive by sea, for at least seven years to come.

*Mr. Secretary Dundas* said, he could not remain silent, when he heard charges of such a nature brought by Gentlemen at the opposite side of the House. He supposed that no person would be absurd enough to contend that the common peace establishment was sufficient for the security of the country at this momentous crisis, and without new levies in the mode stated in the estimates, provision cannot be made against the threatening pressure of existing circumstances. At the commencement of the war independent companies had been raised, and officers of a certain rank had been advanced to higher ranks in the army; the best methods for rendering our military establishment respectable: But still there is a deficiency; and it must either be shewn that the army is sufficient for our safety and protection, or it must be allowed that new levies are necessary, both for recruiting the old regiments and for raising new ones. It is sometimes objected, that too old regiments, and sometimes that too new regiments have been sent abroad for the protection of our foreign possessions. If ever any new regiment has been sent out, it has been only from absolute necessity; and no person, who is at all acquainted with the influence of a foreign climate upon the health of Englishmen, would ever advise such a measure

if by any means it could be avoided. But from the small force at present in the West Indies, the islands were certainly in so critical a situation as called for great reinforcements to place them in a state of security. There were no old regiments at present in the country, new levies must therefore be made; and, what was a subject of regret, but of absolute necessity, raw soldiers must be sent out for the defence of our foreign possessions. As to the marine corps, the fact stands thus:—All the old force has been sent either to the continent, or applied to the foreign possessions. Seven old regiments have also been transferred to the fleet as marines. Every effort was made to increase the marine service, but there has been greater difficulty in procuring hands for this department of the military service than any other, as it is the least popular branch of the public service. The reason is obvious; those who wish to go into the army enlist as soldiers, and those who wish to go on board ship enter as sailors. The only inducement was prize-money; but this proving insufficient, they were compelled to turn the best old regiments into this service. If any order had been given, prohibiting marines from becoming sailors, it was the wisest and most political order which could have been given, as it is always easier to procure sailors than marines. Every augmentation, therefore, of the land force was an augmentation of the naval force, because the land troops could be converted into marines, and marines always constitute an essential part of the complement of a ship. New levies are consequently necessary for the security of our foreign possessions, and raising them is the best mode of augmenting our naval force. Respecting the situation of the troops on board the transports, he would not pretend ignorance; he had paid particular attention to that subject, and he believed that no blame could be attached to Government on their account. But if any Gentleman in that House, if the Hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Sheridan), would inform him of any neglect in the transport service, of any ill treatment which the troops had received, or of any defect of any kind in the mode in which the measures in which they were concerned were conducted, he would account it a high personal obligation. He must be destitute of humanity, and unworthy to bear the shape of a man, who would not interest himself in the cause of those valiant troops, who were leaving their friends and their country to defend its colonies abroad. The fact was, Administration had paid more particular attention to this, than to any other branch of the public service, and he was confident that the case would admit of the most minute investigation. The  
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tonnage of vessels had been particularly attended to; and if any Gentleman would state to him any particular instance, in which one hair's-breadth of the regular tonnage was wanting, he would make it the subject of minute inquiry, and see that those who had been guilty of the fraud, should be punished and disgraced. Another observation which had been made respecting the detention of the transports in port, after the period at which they were appointed to sail, was a circumstance which certainly afforded no cause of complaint. If there was any blame, he would cheerfully plead guilty. But they were kept by contrary winds, a circumstance against which no Administration could provide. The troops were on board, a convoy was appointed, the West Indies called for the reinforcement, orders were given for them to sail, and what, in the name of goodness, could be the motive for delay? Could it be supposed, that the troops were put on board without any intention that they should sail, or that they were kept on board merely to be consumed by disease? Positive orders were given to take no sick men to sea; but because a few were unhealthy, were all to disembark? Was it objected that they were old regiments that were destined to this service? They were the only fit regiments for the purpose. He would ask an Hon. Gentleman, if the raw troops so ludicrously described by him, as composed of boys and old men, would be fit to be sent on such a service—or as an Hon. Gentleman had advised, would he so misapply the forces of the country as to send the fencibles to the West Indies, or put the *cavalry on board*? [Here a loud laugh ensued.] He would not follow an Hon. Gentleman (General Tarleton) in pursuing him along the *wide-extended line*, as he, in military phrase, expressed it on a former night, by taking a review of all the military operations in the Netherlands. If on a former night he did not give information relative to these troops, it was because he was not required to do so. Concerning every thing that fell within his department, he was ever ready to give the most satisfactory information; and if that Hon. Gentleman, or any other in that House, could point out any thing which required redress, he would be particularly happy in the information, and apply such remedy as the nature of the grievance and the cause of humanity might require.

The resolutions of the Committee were read a first time.

Mr. Sheridan, adverting to the difficulty of raising marines, asked why a bounty was not given for encouraging that service. He blamed the remissness of ministers in not sending the troops soon enough on board the transports, as much as their negligence in afterwards detaining them. Sir Charles

Grey had achieved much in the West Indies, but had not a force sufficient for the accomplishment of all he would have probably been able to do, if he had been better supported from home. The delay was the more remarkable, as in the interim General Vaughan and Admiral Caldwell had sailed for the West Indies, and arrived in safety. The Right Hon. Gentleman had stated that they had been allowed all the tonnage fixed by regulation, but the difference was considerable between keeping men on board transports only five or six weeks, and detaining them the same number of months. The Right Hon. Gentleman ought also to recollect, that the treatment and provisions which might be suitable at the period of their embarkation, were very unsuitable, now that they were languishing in sickness, and dying of the most grievous distempers; and supposing them now to sail, of what use will they be? He understood that there were six hundred of the men now sick on shore, and eight hundred on board, and that it was the opinion, that by the time they arrived in the West Indies, all of them would be unfit for service; so that the best method would be to disembark them and get new transports for the expedition. If the succours to be afforded to the West Indies depended entirely on the reinforcement expected from these troops, he must look with a desponding eye to the situation of affairs in that quarter.

Here the resolutions were read a second and third time, and passed.

*Mr. Fox* begged leave to repeat a question which he had put before, but to which he had received no satisfactory answer—Whether the present mode of recruiting for the army interfered with the recruiting of the navy? *Mr. Fox* said that if it was really true, that notwithstanding the immense vote of that night, there was no other force but that now on board the transports applicable to the service of the West Indies, it afforded indeed the most uncomfortable and discouraging prospect of affairs that could well be entertained.

*Mr. Secretary Dundas* replied, that the recruiting of the army does not interfere with the recruiting of the navy to any inconvenient extent; and as a proof of it, they recruited for the navy to almost the whole extent of the number of men which had been voted. He did not state that the force at Plymouth destined for the West Indies, was the only force in the country, but that it was the only force fit for the service; nor could the Hon. Gentleman be surprised at it, when he was put in mind that at the commencement of the war there were only 13,000 effective men in the army, and that since that time all the old regiments have been disposed  
of

of on the continent, in the West Indies, in America, and the East Indies.

*Mr. Francis* wished to ascertain, before the debate went off, what force had really been destined for the West Indies, and asked why transports might not have made the voyage with as much success as ships of war. He understood that some of the troops destined for the expedition had died, and that all of them, in consequence of having been so long on board, were in a very sickly state. If such was the case, it would be better to send no troops at all, than to send such as would either perish in the voyage, or, when they should arrive, be unfit for service.

*General Tarleton* adverted to the unbecoming jocularity of *Mr. Dundas*, which he said might do very well at Wimbledon or Somerset-house; but which he considered as highly indecent in the House of Commons on such a momentous subject. The General suggested that the defects of the mode of raising independent companies were radical.

In order to give full force and energy to our military operations, he thought a Military Committee should be appointed to inspect the conduct of officers, and the mode of putting every measure into execution; and he thought that an Hon. Member, whom he had then in his eye, was a proper person to superintend such an institution.

Adverting to the expedition of *Sir Charles Grey*, he asserted, that he was not sufficiently supported, and that he ought to have been reinforced. As to the troops which lay at Plymouth, he thought their long continuation in the transports must have injured them materially; and in proof of his assertion, he adverted to the troops of *Sir William Howe*, in the American war, who suffered much from a similar situation. At all events, if we had the superiority at sea, the convoy ought to have failed.

*Sir William Young* made some observations upon the clause, and was proceeding to go into a discussion of the conduct of the expedition to Guadaloupe and St. Lucia; and making some allusions which were considered to be personal to the commanders on that expedition, he was called to order by the Speaker, who reminded the Hon. Baronet that the question before the House was not an inquiry into the conduct of particular officers or particular expeditions; and that being the case, he found himself obliged to call him to order.

*Sir William Young* apologized, and expressed himself personally obliged for the interruption.

*Mr. Grey* said, he was aware of the propriety of the Speaker's adhering, with his usual attention, to the point of order, though



though he could have wished, for his own part, that the Hon. Baronet had been allowed to proceed. There was nothing he so much wished for as a full investigation of every circumstance relating to that affair, because he knew much of wicked rumour and mischievous calumny had been circulated industriously on that subject; and he was equally certain, upon the most minute inquiry, whenever it should be made, which it certainly would be, the result would refute those malicious aspersions, and do away all those false and unfounded calumnies and rumours.

*Mr. Secretary Dundas* explained, in reply to Mr. Francis, what he had formerly said, which was, that although some single ships had sailed and made out their voyage, still the circumstances were such as rendered it impossible for a fleet with convoy to sail with any chance of security; and it was to be observed, that the pressure of circumstances was such, that the ships of war had been directed to attempt the voyage at all hazards, in order to accomplish the security of the islands. With respect to the levity which had been ascribed to him, he could only say, that if ridiculous questions were put to him, he could not always avoid giving a ridiculous answer. There was another embargo, however, which had been laid upon him, that he did not so much like, that he should always carry his gravity to Wimbledon. He confessed that he did not speak with the same dignified and oratorical tone with the Hon. General, that he did not measure his periods, and study the cadence of his sentences, so much as he did; and that he did not keep the speech which he had prepared for the opening of Parliament for the discussion of the army estimates: He spoke his sentiments freely, and without disguise, in the language which occurred at the moment.

*Mr. Courtenay* said, he doubted not the facility of the last speaker in *extemporaneous* oratory; if he had any time to spare, therefore, it should be devoted to learning the English language.—

*Mr. Dent* called to order. He observed, that what Mr. Courtenay was about to say had no connexion with the subject in debate.

*Mr. Dundas* said, that the charge imputed to him was a misfortune, and not a fault. He was not to be blamed for the circumstance that his father and mother lived on the other side of the *Tweed*! and that he was born there.

*Mr. Courtenay* said, that the Right Hon. Gentleman was indebted to him for having drawn forth the first instance of modesty which had occurred in thirteen years acquaintance with his public life. The present was not a subject however to be treated

treated with levity. Mr. Courtenay then proceeded to state the information which he had received respecting the bad accommodation for the troops, who had been so long on board the transports, at Plymouth. Some part of his information he thought he had from very respectable authority. He understood that one regiment which had been embarked contrary to the Colonel's advice, who had offered to retain the men on shore at his own expence, had suffered very much, being at the time of embarkation 1000 strong, and at this time, from the confinement, the contagion that had prevailed, and other disagreeable circumstances, were not 400.

*Mr. Francis* insisted that no direct answer had been given to his questions, which he thought deserved answers from their importance. *Mr. Francis* said, the French fleet being out, was a reason why the transports could not safely sail; but then he could not think ministry undeserving of blame in the shameful negligence of the condition of men, stowed together in ships such a length of time. Could the westerly winds continue so long to blow as was stated by ministers? Or, again, allowing the case were so, when they knew the state of the wind, why did they not land the men? Were they then not in the highest degree culpable?

*Mr. Secretary Dundas* repeated what he had formerly stated, as all the answer that was required.

*Mr. Fox* said, he was sure that the House and the country looked to the subjects which had that night been introduced as of so important a nature, that it must be necessary to have them fully investigated. He insisted that there was blame to be laid somewhere, and he had heard nothing urged that tended to throw it off from those to whom it had been imputed. If it was clear, which could not well be denied now, that an insufficient force had been sent out with Sir Charles Grey, and what was worse, that there was no probability at the time of sending to him an immediate reinforcement, such negligence, and the consequences that had ensued from it, called for the most particular inquiry. In his opinion, these facts were made out by what had happened: Sir Charles Grey had sailed in November 1793, with a force surely inadequate, or, if sufficient to conquer the West India islands, completely unfit to keep what they had conquered; and now, when he was speaking, he knew of no reinforcement, nor any adequate assistance, that they had yet received. An Hon. Gentleman had frequently asked in the course of the debate, what motive ministers could have in keeping the troops at Plymouth, or in not attending to their comforts;—he would not pretend to say, because it was impossible for him to know what had been

been their motives, either for that, or the many other blunders and miscarriages which had happened during the present war. Whatever he might think of their motives to the country, it was of little consequence whether they were corrupt or not, inasmuch as they had produced the most disastrous events that could have befallen us.

*The Secretary at War* spoke shortly in reply, and warned the House against being led by the motives that induced Gentlemen on the other side to paint the situation of the country, as they had done, as much as his Hon. Friend had warned against comparing the motives of Administration with the circumstances that had taken place. It was not within human prudence to foresee, or wisdom to prevent, the sailing of the French fleet, except any one would say, that the grand fleet of England should remain off Brest to prevent the French fleet from getting in if they were out, or getting out if they were in.

*Colonel Sloane* intimated it to be his opinion, that the naval strength of the country had been neglected—that sufficient strength had not been employed in the West Indies—that our information with regard to the French fleet had been defective, and that there must be blame somewhere, for keeping the troops and fleet at Plymouth so long as they had been. The Colonel said, that in our present circumstances, it was necessary that we should have squadrons every where; it was necessary to the safety of the country, and even of that House. The necessity of this would be seen within a very short space of time.

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that from June to December, the British fleet had been at sea, and that it was impossible to remain for ever at sea, they must sometimes come in to refit. The French were nursing their fleet in Brest, but taking advantage of the British navy returning to port, they put to sea. The argument of the Hon. Gentleman terminated in this point, viz. that we ought to have a fleet to convoy, and another for the sake of observation. But he contended, that the circumstances of the moment rendered this impossible; and entirely exculpated ministry from the charges thrown out against them. Besides, the decided superiority of this country by sea, proved that the exertions of his Majesty's ministers were not wanted in strengthening the navy.

*Colonel Sloane* said, that what he complained of was, that too much time was spent in what was called refitting. He could not but think that a vessel would do fully as well in action with the enemy even if her sides had not been newly painted. He had witnessed something of this himself in the repairs

repairs of the fleet commanded by Lord Howe. He hoped, that as the Brest fleet, it was understood, was still out, the easterly wind, which must still prevent their return, would enable our sailors to make amends for the delay.

*Mr. Fox* said that every thing he had heard convinced him the more that there was a necessity for investigating every part of this business. The ministers had throughout the war shewn an equal want of intelligence, folly in designs, rashness of conduct, and imbecility in execution, which, even if that House was to wink at, he was sure the Public at large would see the necessity of, and insist upon inquiry. *Mr. Fox* denied that there existed a necessity for the *double* fleet intimated by the minister, unless it could be proved that a fleet should be exactly the same time in fitting as at sea. In point of fact the ministers were wholly ignorant of the sailing of the Brest fleet, though on that information depended the safety of our homeward-bound fleets, without adverting to that of the enemy, laden with naval stores from the Baltic, and which it was the duty of ministers, at all hazards, to intercept.

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that the information of ministers did not depend on the opinion of *Mr. Fox*. He thought that the superiority of our navy was fully manifested by their keeping at sea the greater part of the year.

The remainder of the resolutions being read and agreed to, Bills were ordered to be brought in accordingly.

*Mr. Secretary Windham* moved for leave to bring in a Bill to prevent mutiny and desertion. Leave was given, and persons named to prepare and bring in the same.

#### HABEAS CORPUS ACT.

*Mr. Attorney General* said, it had been his intention to move the second reading of the Bill to continue the Act of last Session, that day; but considering the importance of the subject, and that he wished it to undergo the most solemn and ample discussion, he would, with the leave of the House, propose the second reading next day; at the same time, if that was agreed to, he intimated his intention and wish, that after the second reading should have been discussed, the Bill should go through the Committee the same day.

*Mr. Sheridan* said, that he had no objection to the second reading being put off till next day; but he saw no reason why, by agreeing to that, the House was to go into any compromise, by pledging itself, that the Bill should go through the Committee the same day.

*The Attorney General* explained.

*Mr. Fox* expressed his opinion, that both stages of the Bill could not be gone through the next day. He considered the discussion on the principle of the Bill, and what might be debated on the Clauses and Preamble, in the Committee, as so perfectly unconnected, that there was no probability, considering the importance of the subject, of both debates being concluded in the same day.

The motion for the second reading being agreed to, the House adjourned at nine o'clock.

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## HOUSE OF COMMONS.

FRIDAY, *Jan. 23.*

*Lord Viscount Stopford* reported, that his Majesty had been waited upon with an Address of that House, and that he had been graciously pleased to say he would give directions accordingly.

### INNKEEPERS PETITION.

*Mr. Manwaring* presented a petition on behalf of the Innkeepers and Victuallers of England, signed by about 3000 persons, stating the hardships under which they labour, by means of having his Majesty's troops and horses quartered on them: That the price which they now had for the accommodation which they were compelled to give to such troops, differed but little from what was allowed in the reign of King William, and that no advance was made in that price for the last sixty years: That in consequence of such quartering, their loss now, all together, amounted to near one shilling per day for each man and horse, to the great distress of some, and, if not relieved, to the inevitable ruin of many of the petitioners. The petition prayed in general terms such relief, as to the wisdom and justice of the House should seem meet, and to be heard by themselves or counsel, &c.

*Mr. Manwaring* then moved, that the petition be referred to a Committee, that they do examine the matter thereof, and report it as it shall appear to them to the House.

*The Speaker* said, that if the petition were laid on the table, the Hon. Member by whom it was brought up was not precluded from taking up any part of it, when he thought fit, for separate consideration, though he should relinquish his motion for a Committee.

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that this was a matter of great importance, and so highly deserving of the attention

tention of the House, that he thought they ought to proceed with more deliberation than that of referring at once to a Committee. If the petition was merely ordered to be laid on the table, it would not rest always in that situation, unless those who presented it were negligent of their duty, which he had no reason to suspect; but as he thought that nothing ought to be done upon the subject without a full inquiry, it appeared to him that the best step that could be taken then was, that of simply ordering the petition to be laid on the table of the House.

A short conversation took place, which was supported by *Sir Edward Knatchbull, Colonel Rolle, Mr. Walwin, Mr. Wigley, and Mr. Manwaring*, which ended in the motion for the petition being referred to a Committee, being withdrawn, and the petition being ordered to be laid on the table.

#### CALL OF THE HOUSE.

*Mr. Fox* moved the Order of the Day for the attendance of such Members as did not answer to the Call of the House; which being read, and several defaulters names being called over, a general order was made for the attendance on Tuesday next, of all those who had not yet answered.

On motion being made, leave was given to bring in a Bill for regulating his Majesty's Marine Forces while on shore. The Committees of Supply and of Ways and Means were deferred to Monday next.

#### HABEAS CORPUS.

The Order of the Day having, on the Attorney General's motion, been read for the second reading of the Bill for empowering his Majesty to secure and detain such persons as he shall suspect to be conspiring against his person and government,

The Speaker put the question, That this Bill be now read a second time.

*Mr. Lambton* rose to express his indignation and surprise, at the Right Hon. Gentleman supposing, on the first view of the business, that the House would accede to a proposition of such magnitude as that of the suspension of the liberties of Englishmen, without his informing Parliament on what ground he claimed their concurrence to such a measure.—No criminal matter had been adduced by Government to prove the necessity of the suspension of this palladium of British freedom—no new plot had been offered in extenuation of the offence. *Mr. Lambton* said, that ever since this matter was first thought of, his sentiments had been uniform, and the opinion

which he had at last formed, was not one that was rashly or hastily adopted, but was such as gradually grew up in his mind on the mature deliberation of events as they had happened. In May 1792, when his Majesty's first proclamation was issued against certain seditious and inflammatory writings and publications, he doubted the professed object of those who advised his Majesty to issue that proclamation. It was hardly rational to suppose, the real view was nothing but to warn the Public against the possible effect of such publications, because, had that been really the object of his Majesty's advisers, the proclamation must have been nearly coeval with the publications complained of, when in truth these writings had notoriously been published near two years before the proclamation issued; and in the interim, nothing was heard of from Government upon that subject, although the writings which had been since complained of, had been all this while in general and very extensive circulation; nor was there one step taken, or word said, of the prosecution of any one of the authors of these criminal proceedings: He therefore suspected that there were some views in issuing that proclamation which were not expressed in the words of it; his suspicion increased when he heard these facts given as a ground for calling out the militia, and assembling Parliament without the usual notice; he suspected that the proceedings of persons who had no connexion with Mr. Paine, nor with any of his writings, were the real objects of the minister's first attacks; but his suspicions were at last confirmed, when an Hon. Friend of his, wishing to relieve the Public from the alarms which these ministerial arts had created, moved in the House for a Committee to inquire into these alleged plots and conspiracies, the minister opposed the motion, and it was consequently negatived.—Why were these plots not inquired into? Because inquiry at that time suited not the views and purposes of the minister and his adherents. They had projects which could not be answered by that plain, honest, and direct method, and therefore of inquiry into these plots and conspiracies we heard no more for a considerable time: About sixteen months afterwards, however, the minister himself thought fit to come forward and call for inquiry into plots and conspiracies, and extraordinary indeed was the conduct of Parliament upon that occasion; we had read of the *long* Parliament, and of the *runny* Parliament; possibly posterity might view a *confiding* Parliament in no better light than either: For a confiding Parliament it was which gave the minister credit for his assertions, and agreed to suspend the *Habeas Corpus* Act on the strength of them. He voted, he said, against all these pro-

propositions of the minister; nothing had happened to change, but many circumstances had taken place, which served to confirm that opinion, and therefore it was impossible for him to agree to the motion before the House, which was for the second reading of a Bill for suspending the *Habeas Corpus Act*; nor could any man, in his opinion, fairly agree to such suspension, unless new plots and fresh conspiracies were proved to have been formed, and that proof regularly and fairly brought before that House; a thing which was not even pretended in this case.

He was lately told that this Bill was not a total suspension of the *Habeas Corpus Act*: That all persons who might be wanted to give evidence on trials, and persons imprisoned under any thing except the authority of this Bill, such as those who were to be bailed, &c. would be intitled to the benefit of the *Habeas Corpus Act*, as if this Bill had never passed. This was neither more nor less than a downright quibble.—He would ask if the minister of this country might at will and pleasure imprison whom he pleased, where and when he pleased, without affording to such person any information as to the offence with which he was charged, or who his accuser was, and not to bring such person to trial, until he, the minister, thought fit? This was the sort of power which was to be given the King's ministers by this Bill, and every man in this country was to be put into their hands. Every man from John o'Groat's House to the Land's End was to be imprisoned without privilege or bail, except the Members of the two Houses of Parliament. He believed that instead of being a partial suspension of the *Habeas Corpus Act*, it would not be found in the whole history of England, that the suspension of that Act had on any occasion been more general than by this Bill it was to be. He must again ask what reason had been assigned, for giving at this time so much power into the hands of any government, or why the whole of a people should be placed at the foot of ministers for them to imprison whom they pleased without assigning any cause.—In answer to all this he should be told perhaps of the lenity and indulgence which accompanied the exercise of the power to be given to ministers, by this Bill, for that they have been remarkable for the lenity and indulgence with which they have hitherto exercised their power in that respect; to which he would answer, that no man should be thus left at the mercy of another, unless great and pressing occasion made it necessary. If ministers had shewn this lenity and indulgence to any who had been already imprisoned under the authority of the Bill, and it was necessary they should be imprisoned at all, then he must draw  
this



this conclusion, that the plot did not exist to the extent ministers say it does; if it did, they have been guilty of a breach of duty, by shewing that lenity or indulgence. On the first day of the session he felt considerable indignation at what he then heard from some Gentlemen in that House, on the subject of trial by jury, and the presumption of law as to guilt or innocence. He thought it a principle of law so well and so generally understood—"That every man is to be deemed innocent until he is proved to be guilty," that no English gentleman would deny it. If this was the fact, what was to be said of the case of men whom the law had acquitted? And yet the House had heard an Hon. Member make use of the phrase "an acquitted felon." What must his feelings be when he heard such a sentence in an English House of Commons? He did not say that a Member of that House might not form his opinion, and in certain cases express it on the verdict of a jury; but he would say it was an insult to that House to announce in it, that men were culprits and felons who had been acquitted. He would go further than asserting that a Member of that House might in certain cases give his opinion on a verdict; he would even say a Member of that House might complain of a verdict—but how and for what reason complain? Either where the jury had been packed, or improperly impannelled; where the judge had given wrong directions; or where an evident partiality had appeared in any part of the trial, or where the jury had been bribed on the one hand, or menaced by the judge on the other, and had in consequence of venality or terror given a wrong verdict; in either of these cases any Member of that House had a right to complain of a verdict. But was this the case here?—by no means; there never was a trial to which so much attention and deliberation had been given, as to each of those on which this plot and conspiracy was founded. Upon what principle therefore the persons who had been acquitted were to be arraigned again—for it was arraigning them again to call them acquitted felons—he was at a loss to imagine. Another Right Hon. Gentleman had made a distinction between what he called the forms of law, by which a party was tried and acquitted, and the moral guilt of such party; this was again an unfounded distinction, for the accusation of treason in that House (whether according to law or not was not his business to inquire then) was charged to arise out of the moral guilt or accumulated acts of sedition, demonstrating an intention as dangerous to the state, as direct acts of high treason; therefore the jury having acquitted the persons charged, had, upon his own principle, destroyed the distinction which he

made between the formal acquittal by law of a person charged with high treason, and the moral guilt of such a person who had been guilty of a crime equally dangerous to the state as high treason. He therefore maintained that the persons who had been tried for high treason had been acquitted, according to the deductions of common sense, of both the treason and the sedition; because the object of the prosecution was, to make out, and substantiate treason out of many acts of sedition; the facts failed on the part of the prosecution, and their own evidence disproved the case on the part of the Crown.

Another Hon. Gentleman had asked if the existence of the plot could be doubted, after the grand jury had found the bill—to which he would answer, Most undoubtedly it could; and for this reason, the evidence given before the grand jury was *ex parte* evidence, most probably the evidence of spies and informers, who afterwards committed perjury at the trial. But he might be told, that most of the evidence before the grand jury arose out of documents which were unquestionable as to authenticity. He wished to draw a veil over all that part of the subject, for all these documents came before the jury under a deep impression that they must be sufficient for them to find the bill, because the two Houses of Parliament had, by their votes, expressed as much already. Should he be asked, whether he would advise that mode of proceeding against a person accused with a crime which affected his life, he would answer, Certainly not. Having made these observations on the late trials, he would ask on what pretence did the ministers come forward for the renewal of this Bill?—Were there any new facts on which it was supported?—Was there any ground of any kind for it?—He maintained that there certainly was not. He wished to have some information on these plots and conspiracies, which reminded him of a line—

*Quis, quid, ubi, quibus auxiliis, cur, quomodo, quando?*

He wished to know who the conspirators were, what the conspiracy was, where it was, by whose aid and assistance it was undertaken, and what were the means by which it was to be effected, and when it was to take place?—First, who were the conspirators? Those who were acquitted?—No, hardly—persons hitherto unknown? To speak in the language of the indictment. Certainly hitherto unknown, and he believed, that would for ever remain so; besides, he was bound to conclude there could be no such conspirators in the opinion of the ministers,

sters, else they would have appointed another Secret Committee to inquire into the plot. What was the conspiracy? It was a conspiracy to call a Convention. That was no conspiracy; for a Convention was a thing in itself perfectly legal; and there was no proof that any thing illegal was intended by it. It would remain a legal measure until a Convention Bill should pass here, as it did some time ago in Ireland. Where was the conspiracy? Was it in the metropolis, where, as an Hon. Member had said last year, a great number of desperate villains met in night-cellars, and there exercised with knives and other implements made for the purpose of destruction; and where, in the dead of night, they planned their horrid schemes, to the due and punctual execution of which they took the most solemn oaths, and for the breach of which they called down the most horrid imprecations? All this had been said last year to be true; he wondered that nothing of it appeared in the Report. However, there was nothing in it; this was not to be found therefore in London. Was it to be found in Norwich, or in Derby, or in any other part of the country? Certainly not. By whose aid was the conspiracy to be undertaken? There was not one person brought forward in that character, nor any thing done that could be called dangerous. As to a few foolish letters or addresses to the Convention of France, he thought nothing of them, and it should be remembered that those letters were sent at a time when this country was not in hostility with France; he therefore would maintain that all that these persons aimed at was a Parliamentary Reform on the plan of the Duke of Richmond. The next thing was, by what means this conspiracy was to be effected? Some pikes were brought in on the first trial, but the attempt was so ridiculous, that they disappeared in an instant, and were seen no more. Some persons met at Lambeth for the purpose of being taught their military exercise, but their numbers and condition were such, the former being few and chiefly taylors and taylors apprentices, that he had no doubt but that Townshend or Jealous might have taken their whole army, with their general at their head, and conducted them easily to Bowstreet.

Mr. Lambton said, he would next ask at what time, and under what circumstances, were the people of this country to be deprived of the privileges which were secured to them by the Act of *Habeas Corpus*? When the monarchy was odious?—No—for at no period of our history was the Sovereign beloved more than he was at this moment, nor was there ever a Prince on the throne, who for his virtues deserved to be more beloved.

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Was it when we had no force to preserve our internal tranquillity? No, we had a large corps of Fencibles, and the Militia was embodied in better discipline than perhaps it ever had been before. What chance then was there of any success to conspirators against the state? Most indubitably none. Let men of honour and conscience, therefore, declare whether it was a fit thing that the people of England should without any reason be deprived of their rights. It was, however, a lamentable truth that the King's minister had conducted himself as if he had a hatred for the lower class of society. He had drawn, as it were, a line of demarkation between the rich and the poor in this country. He had taught the rich to look with contempt upon the poor, and the poor to hold the rich in hatred and detestation. For his part, he had always thought, that the true English policy was to unite them in one bond of harmony, and love for the constitution under which they were both protected: Not to encourage suspicion in the one, nor generate envy in the other, so as to make them two separate and hostile parties: Not to treat the poor in England, as it was the policy of the despots of Germany, to regard them as beasts of burden. The minister, Mr. Lambton said, had filled the men of wealth of this country with alarm and apprehension for the possession of their darling property, for the purpose of making them look with distrust upon the poor, and to gain his object in taking away the liberty of the lower class. This might pass for a time, indeed it had passed already. For a time the opinion of the rich would appear to be the entire opinion of the country, and give a certain tone to its politics; but that was a cloud that would pass away; and the whole people of England, seeing with their own eyes, would also speak with their own tongues; and when they should so speak, he hoped and trusted they would speak with a voice that would arouse the most lethargic, and intimidate the most corrupt and profligate of their enemies. He declared, he had no pleasure in saying these things; he could wish there was no foundation for them; but these were not times to mince matters, they were times in which every honest man should speak out the real dictates of his heart; for himself he would venture to say, that if it were possible for his heart to be examined, there was not one in that House that he flattered himself was more pure, or was filled with more ardent wishes for the welfare of the country. He saw no reason to admit, that in point of purity of political intention, he was inferior to any man in that House; he would not have said this if he had not seen something like discontent expressed by Gentlemen on the other

side of the House, on part of what he said relative to the rich and poor.

Such were the grounds on which this Bill for the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act was to be opposed by him. He did not mean to say, there were not any persons who wished to throw things into confusion; such persons there must be in every country; but he meant to say, there was not any thing of such magnitude as to call for the entrusting so dangerous power in the hands of the Executive Government. He was against it, because it gave encouragement to the nefarious practices of those damnable fiends, commonly called spies. He called on the House to remember the conduct of one of these characters, who attempted to take away the life of Mr. Walker of Manchester; and he could not, he said, but lament the frequent disproportion and inequality of punishments and crimes; that perjured villain who swore against Mr. Walker, was sentenced only to be imprisoned for two years; the offence, in his opinion, being worse than highway robbery or burglary, and equal to some murders; at the same time that some journeymen tradesmen, for attempting to raise their wages illegally, were ordered to stand upon the pillory, and to be imprisoned for that time besides!—Was this the time to treat the poor with cruelty?—So far from it, a variety of cogent reasons must press upon the mind of every thinking man to convince him that we should hear their complaints of grievances with attention, and endeavour to relieve them with effect.

Nothing more, Mr. Lambton said, occurred to him to offer upon the subject, except to take notice of a society to which he had the honour to belong. He was happy the minister thought the views of that society moderate and patriotic. Observing some gestures, he proceeded to say, the minister seemed to dissent from the last proposition. He should be glad to hear the minister attempt to prove one act of the society of the Friends of the People, or one sentence written by them, which was not moderate and patriotic. He could not help thanking the minister for the opportunity which he had given him, to say so much of the society to which he had alluded. He hoped their recent actions had proved the truth of what he then asserted. What had that society lately done? They had suspended their proceedings with a view to Parliamentary Reform. Had they abandoned their object? Certainly not. But there was one common danger at present, in which all were involved; it was paramount and superior to all other considerations; it was therefore their duty to refrain for the present, from agitating the minds of the Public; they had there-

therefore withdrawn their efforts for a Parliamentary Reform. How long were they to be thus retired and inactive? During the continuance of our present calamity; no longer. When (said he) it shall please God to remove our present calamity, we shall then stand upon advantage-ground with the people of this country. We shall be enabled to say to them, The dangers and difficulties which you have been under—the calamities you have experienced, were brought on by a corrupt Administration, acting through the medium of a corrupt Parliament—(*A cry of Order! Order! came from the opposite side of the House.*)—Mr. Lambton proceeded—"The language which I have used I will repeat, if it has faded in the recollection of any Hon. Member of this House: I say that will be the advantage-ground on which we shall stand; and such is the address which I, for one, shall make to the people of this country, and I will defy the artifices of any set of men to counteract it, for I know there is a great deal of discernment in the people of this country."

*The Attorney General* then rose. He said there was no man in that House who felt more the immense importance and magnitude of the subject than he did: Perhaps there were circumstances which made his feelings upon it stronger than those of most Gentlemen in that House. The situation he had the honour to hold had thrown a duty upon him as severe, in every sense of the word, as could be thrown upon any individual. In rising to speak upon this question, he felt no animosity, no warmth; he had no other object but truth. In the course of what he had to say, it was his object to convince, and not to offend. The duty he had to perform was of too solemn, too important a nature, and he should be unworthy of the situation he held, if he did in any point endeavour to mislead the judgment of the House. The duty which had been thrown upon him was to conduct a great public prosecution, in such a manner as to render it effectual; but it was also his duty not to render it effectual by violating any one of the rules of law or of justice. He hoped in this particular his conduct was not liable to censure; of this he was sure, that he had acted strictly according to the dictates of his conscience.

In bringing forward this measure, he admitted in the fullest manner what had fallen from Gentlemen on the other side of the House, viz. that very clear, very strong grounds should be made out before they could, or indeed before they ought to assent to the motion. Indeed, so strongly did he feel that it was the right of the people to have this act in force, unless in cases of emergency, that if he had had reason to think that

there existed no real cause why the Bill should continue in existence, he would himself have come forward early in the session to have proposed the repeal; for though the Act was limited to the first of February, yet in his opinion not one day should be lost in restoring the *Habeas Corpus* Act after the danger had ceased. Whether that danger did or did not exist at this moment in such a degree as to justify the continuance of the suspension, was a point upon which he differed from the Hon. Gentleman who spoke last, and he was afraid from several other Gentlemen in that House. He was aware that it was not a popular measure to propose the renewal of this Bill: He knew that popular opinion had been much misled upon the subject, and that some pains had been taken to prevent the people from viewing it in its proper light. He confessed that he felt, in common with other men, a certain degree of reluctance in taking the lead in an unpopular measure; but when he was called upon by reason, by conscience, by his duty to his country, to perform the task, he would do it boldly.

He could not but lament extremely the temper of mind which the Hon. Gentleman who spoke last had displayed upon this question. He had known that Gentleman from his infancy, he knew the virtues of his heart, he knew the powers of his mind, he knew the great extent of his property, and it was that knowledge of him which made him regret the temper in which he had spoken upon this subject. Whenever he saw a man of his weight and consequence in the country professing such sentiments, and supporting them with so much vehemence, it always called to his recollection a letter written by persons calling themselves the Editors of the *Parrot* (a paper published at Sheffield) to the Constitutional Society. This letter, after suggesting a variety of ways of instilling discontent into the minds of the people, goes on thus:—"Whenever you find men apprehensive that an attempt at Reform may produce confusion, and the destruction of property, ask them if they know such a man (naming one of great fortune and character in the neighbourhood, who is an advocate for Reform); he will say, Yes: You may then ask him, whether he supposes that such a man would support a measure which had a tendency to destroy all property, and consequently to ruin him," &c.

Thus it was that the Gentlemen, who really were anxious for the good of the country, were cited as examples, to induce uninformed men to enter into all the wild and dangerous schemes of pretended reformers. This observation he meant particularly to the Hon. Gentleman who had just sat down—*de*

*te*

*as fabula narratur*—he hoped that Gentleman would reflect seriously upon this advice; his immense property gave him great weight in the country, and he hoped he never would suffer designing men to use that weight for the promotion of their own views of confusion and anarchy. This observation was stronger when applied to the society of the Friends of the People. The Hon. Gentleman had said much in favour of that society. It was not his intention to enter into argument upon what might be the intentions of that society; but this he would venture to say, that the example of men, supposed to be men of consequence in the state, had been productive of ill effects to the community.

He certainly did approve of the conduct of the society of the Friends of the People, in ceasing, in the present moment, their exertions for the obtaining a Reform in Parliament; but he should have approved of their conduct still more, if they had shewn more temper in the address by which they communicated that intention to the Public; for, from the way in which it was written, it seemed calculated to excite others to those active measures which they themselves had declined. With respect to the measure then before the House, he had been concerned in it in a variety of characters, and had been called upon to act in it in a variety of capacities. The first situation in which he had been led to consider this business, was as a Member of that Committee to which the papers were originally referred. He had afterwards to view it in a more important light, as his Majesty's Attorney General; and lastly, he came to consider it in a legislative point of view.

Before he proceeded to state to the House the grounds upon which it appeared to him expedient to pass this Bill, he begged leave to reply shortly to some observations which had fallen from the Hon. Gentleman who had just sat down. He had spoken much upon the nature and effect of the verdict of a jury. Nothing could be farther from his intention than to say one word that could be considered as disrespectful to that invaluable institution; no man could look upon juries with more veneration; it was in them that the constitution lived, moved, and had its being. But great and invaluable as the trial by jury was, it could not alone maintain the constitution of this country, particularly when attacked by so many and such powerful engines as it was at present.

He should not only speak of the verdicts of juries in general with respect, but of the particular verdicts which had so often been alluded to. He conceived however that it was no derogation from the character of a jury to say, that in a question like the present, he



he should pay more deference to the opinion of Parliament, than to the opinion of a jury. And he could not avoid saying, that nothing could be more injudicious, nothing more improper, than to praise a jury at the expence of Parliament. But the opinion of the juries who decided in the late trials, and the opinion of Parliament upon this subject, did not differ in the smallest degree, notwithstanding all that had been said to set the one in opposition to the other.

The view in which it was considered by the juries, and the purpose for which they investigated it, were so extremely different from the grounds upon which it was examined by Parliament, that the decision of the one had no effect upon the other. No man was more likely to be mistaken than he was ; but it appeared to him that it was by no means necessary that any of the individuals accused of treason, should have been convicted, in order to justify Parliament in passing this Bill, because it was not proposed on account of the guilt of any individual in particular, but upon the existence of a conspiracy ; the verdicts had acquitted the persons accused. As to the existence of the conspiracy, the verdicts said nothing, and indeed that was a subject upon which Parliament was fully competent to decide for itself.

If he appeared to speak with too much confidence upon this subject, he hoped the House would forgive him ; so much of his time had been spent in examining the whole case, in various points of view, and for different purposes, that he, perhaps, felt himself justified in speaking at least with some confidence. As a Member of the Committee, his duty was to inquire whether there was ground for the report which was made. As his Majesty's Attorney General, he had a more important, a more solemn duty to discharge. Upon examining every part of the case with all the industry and skill he could bestow, he felt himself compelled to carry the business before a grand jury ; but upon this occasion he had not trusted to his own judgment, he consulted with some of the ablest men in the profession of the law (not more able, he thanked God, than those employed for the prisoners), and they concurred with him in thinking it a proper case for the consideration of a grand jury.

Having taken these precautions, the case was submitted to a grand jury, who sanctioned by their concurrence the opinion he had formed. He had often heard censures passed upon that power vested in the hands of the Attorney General, viz. that of filing informations *ex officio* ; but he never before heard such an attack upon the character and functions of a grand jury,

jury, which in general is considered as a safeguard of the liberty of the people, almost equal in point of effect with the petit jury. It had been said that the grand jury must have been prejudiced from the predetermination of Parliament. If this argument had any weight at all, it must go the length of proving that it was wrong for Parliament to interpose, though they saw the country threatened with imminent danger, for fear that it might influence the determination of a grand jury.

As to the grand jury having proceeded upon *ex parte* evidence, it was true; but so did every grand jury, and upon this occasion they spent four days in investigating the charge, and great part of the evidence upon which they founded their determination, consisted of written documents. The Hon. Gentleman had declaimed with much vehemence upon the circumstance of spies having been examined. In the first place, he wished to observe, that very few of the persons coming under that description were examined before the grand jury; and with respect to those examined on the trials, he had done what he conceived to be his duty: He had prefaced the examination of these witnesses, by telling the jury that they were not to give credit to persons standing in that predicament, unless in points in which they were confirmed by other witnesses, or where they were not contradicted by other witnesses. He had, in the course of a pretty active professional life, been present at many trials in which persons called spies had been examined; and he never remembered one single case in which the opposite party had gained so little by the attack made upon them; besides, the House should recollect that those spies stood in a very different predicament in those trials from what they did upon most occasions. They did not come to speak of transactions which passed in a corner, they did not come to prove conversations between two individuals, and where, of course, the person accused can have no means of defence. On the contrary, they spoke to facts which happened every week in public societies; and if in giving their evidence they mistated facts, there were hundreds of persons who might have contradicted them.

But during all those trials, that was not the case in a single instance. He therefore had a right to rely upon the testimony given in such a public manner by uncontradicted witnesses. As to the individuals who had been tried and acquitted, he meant to say nothing respecting them; he would only remark generally, that in point of law, and indeed in point of common sense, the real and the only effect of a verdict of *Not Guilty*, generally speaking, was, that the person could not be tried again for the same offence.

No man who pretended to know any thing of the theory of the law, no man who knew any thing of its practice, could for a moment contend that a verdict of *Not Guilty* was a full establishment of the moral innocence of the party accused. He would put a case upon this subject: Suppose upon a charge of treason, any gentleman of the most unblemished honour was to give evidence of an overt-act, to the satisfaction of every man who heard him, still if there was no other evidence, the prisoner must be acquitted; because the law says, there must be two witnesses to every overt-act. Here was a case of a verdict of *Not Guilty*, in which every person must be satisfied of the real guilt of the person acquitted.

There were cases even in which the confession of guilt by the party accused could not be received against him in evidence: In such a case, though a jury might be bound by law to acquit the prisoner, yet could any man think that the verdict of *Not Guilty* was a proof of moral innocence?

He would state to the House a most extraordinary fact, in corroboration of the argument he had just been maintaining. While he and his Learned Friend (Mr. Erskine) were contending at the trials about the meaning of a publication of one of the societies, that very society published another paper, avowing that their meaning in the former publication was exactly that which he had put upon it. But he could not in point of law produce the second paper to prove the meaning of the first, because the latter paper was written after the prisoner had been taken into custody.

Here was a case in which no human being could doubt the meaning of the paper; but yet he was prevented by technical rules from proving it. Let us then, continued the Attorney General, preserve the constitution in all its branches, let us preserve it in Parliament, let us preserve it in grand juries, let us preserve it in juries, let us preserve it, not by sacrificing the one branch to the other, but by giving to each its due portion of respect. It would be extremely dangerous to give into the habit of treating the functions of grand juries with levity or with disrespect, for that would teach them to think lightly of their office, and then they would execute it negligently. Fortunately, this was not a country in which a man could be tried for any species of offence whatever, with a *counter-revolutionary intention*, and then, if acquitted, might be taken up and tried again for the same fact. The law here was clear, the judges independent, the juries upright, and the decisions respected. Sufficient ground having been laid before Parliament to justify them originally in suspending the *Habeas Corpus* Act, the ques-  
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tion was then, had the verdicts of the juries disproved the existence of the conspiracy, and rendered the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus Act* unnecessary.

The Hon. Gentleman said, that the alarm raised in 1792 was totally without foundation; but he would shew the House that these societies were totally incompatible with the Government of England, inasmuch as it was their object to introduce a system of government similar to that of France. Gentlemen have said, that the letters and addresses, sent from this country to the French Convention, were idle, foolish papers. Whether the epithets of foolish and idle could be with propriety applied to them, he would leave it to the House to judge.

It was worth notice that the societies in England never addressed the Convention till after the deposition of the King, but confined their communications to the Jacobin and other societies. But when the Convention had deposed the King, then they became a fit body for the English societies to correspond with; accordingly, after that period, numerous addresses were sent from the societies in England to that thing calling itself the Convention of France. The Attorney General read a variety of extracts from the correspondence between the two countries, proving the object on both sides of the water to have been the same.

Having commented upon those letters (which have already been before the Public so often), he proceeded to remark upon the persons who had delivered the addresses at the bar of the Convention. Upon the writings of Mr. Joel Barlow in particular, he animadverted with much severity. He then took a view of the principles contained in Mr. Paine's Works, and remarked that Mr. Paine and Mr. Barlow, both of whom had written against monarchy with the utmost violence, were stated by many of the societies to have expressed their sentiments in those publications.

But it seemed to the Hon. Gentleman, that to praise the French for having deposed the King, to adopt all their principles, to avow the sentiments of Mr. Paine and Mr. Barlow, and to express a hope that the French would soon send over letters of congratulation to a National Convention in England, were idle, foolish acts, and not deserving of punishment. He begged to ask the House, whether men acting upon such principles as these were not dangerous? and whether, as these societies had not disavowed these principles, it was not necessary that Government should be armed with extraordinary power to resist them? There was one fact rather of a singular nature, to which he wished to call the attention of the House, which was, that the Address from the London Constitutional

Society to the National Convention of France, was voted in the month of November 1792; and, in the same month, the Convention passed their famous decree, in which they offer to assist the subjects of every country against their governors.

The Attorney General went through a regular detail of the proceedings of the societies from the month of November 1792, down to the meeting at Chalk Farm in 1794, commenting upon each paper as he went along, and proving the seditious intentions of the societies.

Upon the Scotch Convention he dwelt for some time, and contended very forcibly that it was absurd to suppose the intention of that Convention was to apply to Parliament for redress, when every part of their proceedings shewed clearly that they had no such intention.

Mr. Attorney General then adverted to the subject of arms, and said it was impossible to suppose those arms, which were made all alike, had been manufactured in different parts of the kingdom at the same time, by accident. It must have been a preconcerted plan—a plan, fortunately for this country, prevented by the vigilance of Parliament.

Having pressed these arguments with his usual ingenuity, he concluded with saying, he should have no objection to the insertion of a clause in the Bill to enable Parliament, if the cause ceased, to repeal the Bill even during this session—so anxious was he that it should not exist a moment longer than the urgency of the case required.

But feeling, as he did, that there existed in this country, at the present moment, a very considerable degree of danger, the duty he owed to the constitution induced him to propose this Bill; though, at the same time, no man felt more regret than he did that there should exist a necessity for such a measure.

Mr. Jekyll professed, that the first impression which he received from the Hon. Gentleman's speech was surprise, that a person of such talents and such discernment as he knew him to possess, could ever suppose that the British House of Commons was composed of such materials as to consent to a measure of so much importance to the subject as the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act, without having brought forward one new fact for their consideration, and indeed from no better reason than his conceiving it to be necessary. The Hon. and Learned Gentleman's speech, Mr. Jekyll said, consisted entirely of the old Report of the Secret Committee newly hashed up, and of the evidence brought forward in the late trials, and contradicted by repeated decisions and verdicts of juries. In short,

short, the House, upon grounds which would not in any other case be admissible, were a second time desired to suspend this most important part of the British constitution. The Bill was now held out as a measure of prevention; a new phrase was employed to suit the occasion; it was said to be for the purpose of preventing a disposition to *moral guilt*—a thing which had not before been heard of, as an object of legislative precaution. Did the Attorney General imagine they were to surrender the palladium of their liberties, merely because he thought proper to call upon them so to do? Was he prepared to demand that the House should resign their countrymen into the hands of a despotic and unrelenting minister; and that he should be able to imprison Britons, whose birthright was freedom, whenever he should be pleased to suspect them of criminality of conduct, though he should be unable to substantiate any such charge by a shadow of evidence? That would be a tale of prevention indeed!

Another doctrine which the Hon. and Learned Gentleman had that evening preached forth in a tone of imposing solemnity, was, that societies of the people had no right to influence the conduct of their representatives, or to exercise any sway over the measures of Parliament. This doctrine, Mr. Jekyll declared, he would firmly deny; and he believed few other Members of that House possessed that degree of audacity that could embolden them to maintain it; few, he believed, would venture to contradict the constitutional fact of the case being directly otherwise. And he would ask, Was any man wild enough to think that Parliament, if left alone, would ever set about reforming itself?

The next point urged was a very singular species of evidence, namely, that nine-tenths of the people, who were members of these societies, and who co-operated in their measures, were ignorant of their real designs. What! was the ordinary course of justice incompetent to restrain the improper conduct of so small a number as one-tenth of the individuals connected with these societies? If such were the fact, the power of the laws of this country must be enfeebled and paralysed beyond any former example. And he would not make so severe a satire upon the profession of which he was a member, as to say, that the justice of the country, administered according to the usual course of law, was not sufficient to punish so diminutive a number. He would not affirm that it was so paralysed, so debilitated in its operations, as to render necessary the intervention of new and extraordinary acts of the Legislature. If it was the object to repress sedition, the Crown surely had not been sparing of pro-

secution for sedition. Was then the *Habeas Corpus*, the grand bulwark of the liberties of Englishmen, to be suspended for the crime of a few individuals?

He could not help remarking, that another practice had obtained, which he lamented as a man and a legislator. When facts were found insufficient, and the deficiency of evidence became glaring, then prejudice was attempted to be instilled into the minds of the Members of the House of Commons; and charges which were made but could not be substantiated, were supplied by ridicule and declamation. The decisions of juries were also endeavoured to be exposed in a style of derision; and on a sudden, a discovery novel and extraordinary in its nature, had been made, namely, that the verdict of acquittal was insufficient to clear the character of the acquitted from the imputation of criminality. A new phrase also was invented, in order to supply the exigency of the moment; and where no legal culpability could be fixed, *moral guilt* was found to have a share in the character. One Gentleman, whose metaphysical distinctions had sometimes considerably interested the House, had had the bare-faced effrontery to bestow upon those men, who had been honourably acquitted by the verdict of their fellow-citizens, the disgraceful and unjustifiable epithet of *acquitted felons*! When, however, that Right Hon. Gentleman had been called upon to maintain the charge he had made, he had shrunk from the attempt to defend an imputation so unwarrantable; and fearful that the expression should be converted into a watch-word, had been obliged to change the expression into a simile, which, Mr. Jekyll declared, was full as reprehensible as the original reproach on persons pronounced innocent by a jury of their country.

He lamented that he could not express his detestation of language so unjust and dangerous, in terms as eloquent as a Noble Lord had done in a discourse pronounced *somewhere* on a former occasion, and which the Noble Person he alluded to had condescended to give to the Public in the form of a pamphlet.

In that publication the Noble Author inveighed bitterly against the tyranny of the decrees of the Convention, "and their passionate invectives against mercy and justice: For the purpose of apprizing you (says the Noble Lord) of the general idea of the Legislators of France upon the subject of personal liberty, I will now read to you the law which passed on the 17th of September \*.

\* Lord Mornington, page 110.

"Immediately after the publication of the present decree, all *suspected* persons who shall be found within the territory of the Republic, and who are yet at large, shall be put into a state of arrest.

"The law then proceeds to define, in eleven classes, who shall be deemed suspected persons.

"The eleventh clause enacts, that civil and *criminal* tribunals may detain, as *suspected* persons, those whose indictments have been thrown out by the *juries of accusation* previous to trial, and those who shall have stood their trial, and been *acquitted*.

"By the last article of the law (the Noble Author proceeds), a class of persons is included, very *inconsiderable indeed in number*, but which one might suppose to be exempt from suspicion, even under all the vigilance and jealousy of a revolutionary government; I mean those who have been acquitted by the previous jury of accusation, or who have been declared innocent, after a regular and solemn trial.

"This is the perfection of tyranny. It is not enough to deprive men of their liberty, without alleging any specific crime against them, or without admitting them to a hearing; but even after they have been heard, and declared innocent, they are still subjected to penalties which belong only to convicted guilt \*."

In our own country the penalties, said Mr. Jekyll, of reproach and suspicion cast upon them by the unwarrantable language of his Majesty's ministers, and of liability to fresh arrests on the renewed suspension of that Act which is the sole guardian of every man's personal liberty, he would venture to say, could not be justified by any rule of rhetoric. He was happy, however, Mr. Jekyll said, to hear the Attorney General, in the course of that evening, reprobate, in terms so strong, any insinuation derogatory to the character or impeaching the conduct of an English jury. In so doing, he certainly acted with propriety; but when he united with the partisans of his cause in asserting, that the persons who had been taken into custody on suspicion, had suffered no punishment, he was at a loss to know whether the Learned and Hon. Gentleman was serious in his assertion, or whether he made the observation merely for the sake of uniformity. Was it, he would ask, no penalty to the accused, to be stigmatised in the great Council of the Nation, with the degrading character and the odious titles of conspirators and traitors? — to be liable to be re-committed and re-tried, and to endure

\* Lord Mornington, page 112, 114.



the loss of liberty for the space of six or seven months? Had not the *Habeas Corpus* Act been suspended? Such language as had lately been heard, had not been held in that House or elsewhere before, nor had such treatment been ever experienced. This principle of conduct, however, might possibly be accounted for on the grounds of salutary discipline and benefit to the health. The prisoners had, no doubt, been very handsomely treated by the Gentlemen at the Tower; they had full permission to promenade upon the ramparts; and if any of them should have a turn for music, they might frequently be entertained with the melody of their neighbours voice—the sound of the lions roar!

Another extraordinary argument used by the Attorney General was, that two persons having been convicted in Scotland, notwithstanding the failure of nine or ten having been committed in England and acquitted, the convictions in Scotland were proof of a conspiracy in England! Such reasons, however, bade defiance, equally to the powers of argument or of pleafantry.

An Hon. and Learned Gentleman (Mr. Anstruther) had been sent down, to teach them in Scotland English Law—not surely from any experience which he had had of the practice of the English Courts—accompanied with an English Clerk, for the sake, he supposed, of explaining the Scotch language. The consequence of all this mangement and preparation on the part of ministers was, hanging one of their own spies. He did not know whether it was any part of the original contract, that this spy should submit to be hanged, when it was found necessary for the service of the cause. After all the libels upon the character of Englishmen, after all the charges which had been held out of treasonable disposition, what did take place after all the late acquittals? Nothing but that decent and animated triumph, which terminated in conducting to their houses the two Advocates, who, by their exertions on the trials, had done themselves immortal honour. Every one had a right to rejoice in the event of those acquittals, because, in consequence of them, every one felt himself more secure in the possession of the privileges which he enjoyed as a British subject. Who did not know, that, if convictions had taken place, ministers might not have had warrants ready to issue against any who might have rendered themselves obnoxious by opposition to their measures?

Mr. Jekyll observed, that no one fact had been adduced; but the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act was now considered merely as a matter of course, and an annual motion, like that to prevent clandestine outlawries, or any other of a similar

similar nature. The fact, however, which he had discovered, was this, that the system of alarm was persisted in, merely as an artifice, in order to induce the people to acquiesce in the continuance of a disastrous and disgraceful war. He did not, however, contend that this was the only motive with Administration for suspending the *Habeas Corpus Act*; they might, perhaps, have others: He had no doubt that ministers would be pleased to see English liberty expiring at their feet, and that they wished, as much as possible, to countenance and maintain the system of spies and informers; a system for which, in the English language, the House could not find an adequate name, but which they were obliged to seek for under the old government of France; a system however, which the suspension of such an Act must most materially encourage.

As a proof that this system was not abandoned by ministers, he here read the following part of a letter published in one of the newspapers, from a person who had been solicited to engage as a spy, but had refused to act in that capacity:

“ SIR,

“ Having had the misfortune to be applied to on the part of ministry, by Mr. William Metcalfe, of No. 6, Dowgate-hill, to become one of the numerous spies by which the present *virtuous* Administration are supported, I conceive the best mode of avoiding their *courtly importunity*, without falling a *victim* to their disappointment, will be by laying the proposal before the Public at once.

“ The application was made to me on Sunday the 14th instant; when Mr. Metcalfe, visiting my humble dwelling, after some *ridicule*, and *jokes on public virtue*, observed, that Government already had *one spy* in the Committee of Correspondence, but they wished to have *another*, to report the proceedings; that they might be assured of his *fidelity or treachery*.

“ So anxious was the tempter for the success of his *snare*, that his visit was renewed on *Tuesday*, when I not being at home, he again came on *Wednesday*; not being at home this time *either*, he left word, that I should call upon him at his house, and he would wait my *arrival* at any time in the afternoon. Not choosing to do this, I received a fourth visit on *Thursday*, when he again urged his proposals, offering to introduce me to Mr. Ford, at the Duke of Portland's office, Whitehall; or to receive any information himself, at his own house, under cover; that, if I would accept the office, I should have *fifty guineas prompt payment*, and *one guinea regularly for each weekly report*.”

Mr. Jekyll concluded with adverting to what the Attorney General had said respecting the decisions of juries, and with entering his protest against the suspension of that Act, on which depended the best energies and the dearest privileges of Englishmen.

Mr.

Mr. Francis said, that he meant to reply to some facts, which had been advanced by the Learned Gentleman (the Attorney General) in consequence of his connexion with the Society of the Friends of the People. The Society indeed seemed to be no favourite of the Learned Gentleman. He appealed, however, to an authority still higher than that of the Learned Gentleman; that of Chief Justice Eyre, who on the late trials gave every species of approbation to the conduct of the Society, and even imputed it as a matter of blame to the other Societies, that they had not adopted the same system of proceeding. Whether they were favourites, or not, the Learned Gentleman ought at least to do them justice, and if he meant to bring any charge against them, to give them notice, that they might have their papers ready. The Learned Gentleman had said that in their answer they disclaimed any correspondence with the Constitutional Society, because they had violated the constitution; this was a gross and palpable, he hoped not a wilful, misrepresentation.

The Hon. and Learned Gentleman had stated likewise, that the Friends of the People carried on a correspondence with the Sheffield Society, at the time when they corresponded with the Constitutional Society, for improper objects—a circumstance, of which the former could not possibly be aware. With respect to universal suffrage, Mr. Francis said, he, for one, had always been the determined enemy to that foolish, contemptible, and impracticable doctrine. But while the Hon. Gentleman, by the papers which he read, seemed to lay so much stress on the proposition of universal suffrage, he had not said one word of its author, the Duke of Richmond, by whom it was first brought forwards, and to whose arguments all its subsequent supporters had uniformly resorted. The Hon. Gentleman professed himself to be a great friend to juries; but, in order to estimate the sincerity of this profession, let Gentlemen recollect the whole course of his argument: He had affirmed the decision of a grand jury to be a strong presumption of guilt, and the verdict of a common jury to be but a slender presumption of innocence. Mr. Francis said, that the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* seemed at this day to be considered as a matter of course. Why did not ministers take their old ground, and imprison some individuals for seven or eight months? But what was the necessity of suspending the *Habeas Corpus*, if no new case had arisen? If there was no intention to prorogue Parliament, as certainly there was not in the present situation of affairs, why might not they pursue the same course as they had done

last year, and, if any emergency should occur, come down to the House, and suspend the *Habeas Corpus* in one day?

*The Attorney General*, in explanation, referred to some letters of the Friends of the People, to the Society at Sheffield, which had the effect to support measures, the tendency of which they could not themselves discover, and consequently were not aware of.

*The Solicitor General* entered into a panegyric on the institution of the English jury, which he considered as superior to every other form of juridical decision that could be devised, and as admirably calculated for the ends of justice. At the same time he said, he must remark that the verdict of a jury was conducive only to one point, namely, that the person acquitted should not be tried for the same charge again. As an instance that a conspiracy might exist, of which it might be impossible to produce any evidence, he referred to what had some time since happened in Edinburgh—the case of Captain Porteous. That Gentleman was Captain of the guard which attended at an execution, for the sake of preserving order. The cry of Reprieve! falsely circulated among the multitude, produced a considerable degree of tumult. The Captain ordered the soldiers to fire. Several persons were killed, some of them were innocent spectators, looking from windows. The Captain was imprisoned, tried, and found guilty of murder, and would have suffered; but by the interest and solicitation of his friends a pardon was obtained. The mob, however, were so much incensed at his conduct, that they broke into the prison, carried off Captain Porteous, and immediately hanged him. Yet, though the mob was composed of several thousand persons, and a considerable reward, as well as indemnity, was offered to any who should discover those who were concerned in that mob, not one person was found to give the smallest information. Here then was clearly an instance of a conspiracy having existed, which it was impossible to detect by any evidence. When it was stated that the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* was dangerous, the question naturally arose, What was the degree of the danger? There certainly was a difference between a temporary and perpetual suspension; and there certainly could not be much danger to the liberties of the subject, when the expediency of the measure was liable to be debated every session. If it was contended, that it was a measure which could not be adopted without danger, he defied any one to shew, that, in all the former instances in which it had been adopted, it had been attended with those dangerous consequences, which Gentlemen affected to anticipate. He proceeded to state

what he considered as the ground of continuing the suspension, namely, the existence of a conspiracy, endangering the established Government. He stated the distinction between the plan of the Duke of Richmond, and the system held out by the societies; the former went only to a certain mode of reform, whereas the latter, if it was carried into effect, went entirely to destroy the King and the House of Lords. He adverted to the calling of the Convention of the People, which he maintained to be unconstitutional in the extreme, and calculated to involve the country in all the horrors of riot and confusion.

Any assembly, saying that in which he then sat, styling themselves the Representatives of the People, indicated the strongest symptoms of an insurrection; and at the same time, manifested their wish to supersede the existing government of the country. After such proceedings, could any person doubt of a conspiracy? In the resolution of the 20th January 1794, they declare they would be governed by their own laws; and if such a declaration did not excite alarm, he did not know what could. Their designs, he contended, had not been given up, nor had they ever disavowed their principles.

*Mr. Curwen* said, that in order to sanction the passing of the Bill, he expected something new in its nature and apparently criminal in its tendency would have been brought forward; he had not, however, found that any thing was produced of a later date than 1794. He certainly considered the proceedings of some of the societies to be very dangerous, but, at the same time, he was aware that the numbers of those who composed them were not considerable. The proportion of dangerous individuals was very small, and the existing laws were, he believed, fully sufficient to have kept them in order. He appealed to the House, whether at any time more unanimity had been shewn in giving to ministers every thing which they could desire, or whether a greater military force had ever been voted than for the service of the current year. But he had, he said, last session perceived a design among ministers to raise an alarm in the country. How had they accomplished their object?—They had contrived to destroy confidence, and to introduce a system of *espionage*: But they had been able, after all, to hang only one of their own spies—a wretch execrated by all parties; one, who went into the societies to incite the sedition which he meant to report, and to betray them into the toils, that he might afterwards sell them. He thought, that there had at no time existed more energy and unanimity in the country than

than at present. Were we then, by renewing the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus*, to give out that the evil existed at home, that the danger arose from want of confidence among ourselves? He thought that the present was a period to look not to men, but to measures; and when he saw ministers, instead of attending to the great concerns of the nation, engaged in a miserable scramble for places and pensions, he must own that he could not refrain his indignation. Who could hear with patience that a great man, in engaging to support the measures of Administration, bargained for and secured a sinecure place for his son? Such a circumstance, he was ready to confess, almost made him forget his moderation; and if such was the effect produced upon his mind, he could easily make allowance for the impression produced upon the minds of others in a different situation of life.

Lord William Russell said, that he could not look with disrespect to the verdict of a jury, and that on this head he must rather distrust the professions of the crown officers, who, though they had declared great respect for the decision of a jury, had yet, as much as possible, endeavoured to do away its effect. If he was asked to support the measure of the further suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act, the most simple and obvious answer that occurred to him was, what treason had existed, or what traitors had been convicted? Before he could consent to the renewal of the measure, he wished to know what benefit had been derived to the country from the extraordinary power already granted to ministers. He concluded, that if any men thought the *Habeas Corpus* at all worth preserving, they ought certainly to exert themselves to prevent its suspension in the present moment.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer said, he did not mean then to enter into the debate, but merely rose in consequence of an insinuation which had dropped from the last speaker, relative to a Noble Earl, now high in office in his Majesty's council. The fact was, that the Noble Earl had not, upon coming into office, received any sinecure or new place whatever, far less had he bargained for any; he had held the place of Lord Justice General for Scotland a long time, a place that had been frequently given to Noblemen who had served in a diplomatic capacity abroad, with the reversion for one life. In the present instance his Majesty had been graciously pleased to desire the Noble Earl, unasked, to name the life for the reversion; this was the true state of the case, and he thought it his duty to explain it to the House.

Mr. Curwen said, that if the Noble Lord had resigned the one place without accepting the reversion of the other for his

son, he would not have made a greater sacrifice than the circumstances of the times might be supposed to call for, from men of his large fortune and high station.

Mr. Hardinge confessed the incapacity of entering into conflict with all or with any part of that which had called itself argument upon the other side of the House; because, in his view of it, either it bore no conceivable relation to the subject, or was of a nature to be self-refuted. This he would undertake in a few and plain words to demonstrate.

He would first recall the debate into the only point of it. It was a question of legislative policy, whether, upon a balance of two opposite evils, and both of them constitutional in their nature, an existing peril to the safety of the realm did or did not authorise the further suspension of the *Habeas Corpus Act*?

That such a peril *did* exist when the Legislature passed the Suspension Bill, was a *fact*. It was *then* taken upon trust from the reports of Committees, but since that period has been authenticated and *proved*.

Here a fallacy and perversion had arisen, which astonished him when he looked at the enlightened understanding that had bent itself to the support of it (Mr. Fox), and which common sense would refute. It had been said, "that what the Committees and the House of Commons had believed had been *disproved* by the juries, because they had acquitted the accused conspirators."

This was a puzzle absolutely childish if it were examined. It assumed, in the first place, that, by acquitting some of the accused conspirators, the juries had negatived the existence of a conspiracy: And it had been said with an air of triumphant wit—"Here is a conspiracy, without conspirators!" But what is arch in expression, is not always correct in reasoning. He would say, Yes; there *is* a conspiracy, without conspirators. That is, there is a conspiracy, but there are no conspirators whom the law has yet been able to reach as guilty of high treason. An Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Lambton) who opened the opposition of that night, had said, that all inquiries into guilt resolved themselves into a Latin hexameter,

Quis? quibus auxiliis, quid, quando, quomodo, quare.

The juries had answered the word *quis* by saying *not* Mr. Hardy, *not* Mr. Horne Tooke, *not* Mr. Thelwall. Their province was to implicate or exculpate individuals. The House had a different and a more extensive duty. They were to determine the general question, whether a conspiracy did or did not exist; and if they found its existence, to guard against the evil.

evil: That it existed, they had legislatively inferred by the Suspension Bill, from the facts before them. Those facts were proved at a later period, as well to the jury as to the public. A Learned Friend of his (Mr. Erskine) had said, "the *fact* had been proved, but the *conclusion* disproved." If the fact was proved, and if the jury had even said, "We acquit Mr. Hardy, *because*, from the facts proved, *we* infer no conspiracy," Mr. Hardy would be well acquitted. He, as a Member of Parliament, would abide by his own conclusion, and should think himself degraded in his legislative character if he surrendered his judgment in forming that conclusion to the juries who had formed an opposite one.

Having said this, he was anxious to have it understood that he entertained for the acquitted persons all the delicacy that was due to them, and that he considered them as being innocent—Could he say more? He was anxious equally to have it understood in general, that no human creature could be more an enthusiast for the right of juries or the palladium of our liberties, the *Habeas Corpus* Act. He should be of all men the most ungrateful, and of the coldest heart, if he had not caught in some degree that enthusiasm from his Noble Relation (Earl Camden), with whom he had been incorporated, if he might use that phrase, for the best part of his life in the most affectionate habits and the most cordial friendship. Nor could he forget that it was to that Noble Person in the other House of Parliament that we owed the celebrated statute upon the subject of libels, which restored and fixed upon a rock the right of juries over the whole of the case in criminal proceedings. Nor could he also forget that it was the same great man (as he could venture to call him), who (with his friend the Earl of Chatham), though he was then Attorney General, was in a minority as a champion of this very *Habeas Corpus* Act, which it was proposed now to suspend in some parts of it. Having proved that such a peril *did* exist, he would next ask another question, which in a manner answered itself—Had it been supposed by the House of Commons that upon account of these acquittals the Suspension Bill should be repealed? A recent vote had said the reverse in opposition to a direct, a very laboured, and a very ingenious effort the other night for that purpose.

He admitted, however, that, having proved these points, he was to go further, and satisfy the House, if he could, that what existed in those periods, equally at the *moment* in which he addressed them—in other words, that such a degree of treasonable conspiracy existed *now*, as to warrant a *further* suspension of this law. He would not only assert this to be the fact, be-  
cause



cause it had not been proved that what existed then had ceased; but he would meet the question fairly, and from the verdict itself, under all the circumstances, infer the necessity of this Bill. That verdict, accompanied as it was by the facts of an existing conspiracy (which had been proved), amounts to this, to the legal impunity and the legal innocence of all those who had been yet put upon their trial for their part in that conspiracy. A verdict so accompanied had left a body and mass of treason upon authenticated proofs, and which the rules of law had not enabled the interest of the Public to correct by a verdict of conviction against any one conspirator. This would of itself encourage those who had embarked in these wicked councils, would heighten the alarm, and make the danger.

That was not all—Could it be forgot that it was *no common treason* then before them? If it had been *English* treason, he might perhaps have been satisfied that no such interposition would be necessary to repress it; but it was *French* to the very bone, and French at a moment of all others in which the fatal prevalence of that enemy in arms abroad, as well as in mischief here, was at the height. When his Learned Friend (the Attorney General) had stated the intercourse of Jacobin Societies here with Jacobin Societies in France, he (Mr. H.) had observed particular stress laid by a kind of loud whisper upon the date of those papers which proved the intercourse; *a date prior to the commencement* of the war. The tone of that whisper seemed as if it came from a person (Mr. Fox) blest with too sound a head, as he should have hoped, for such child's play as the difference. Has that intercourse, and have those principles, been ever disavowed since the enemy had engaged us, and since the war had made this kind of intercourse treason?

It was the more necessary to mark the continuance of that mischievous intercourse, because a veil had been thrown over it, which had misled thousands into the real design, before they were themselves apprized of it. This flimsy veil, as it was in itself, had been removed, and, as he was confident, removed for ever (in argument at least), by his Learned Friend (Serjeant Adair) on a former night, who had not shewn the least mercy to it, having torn it into a thousand pieces, with an ability that was never to be forgot, either in that place, or by the Public at large. Could the House *forget* that it was part of the high treason imputed and proved (upon evidence that could not lie upon authentic papers) to erect the ensigns of rebellion *in case of an invasion*; for he would not so disgrace himself or the House, as to *argue* that rebellion alone was the object

object of that meeting, which this event should be the signal to convene. Could it be forgot that we are now at war against the enemy of ourselves, and of the human race, whose inordinate power we have not been able to repel, who are at our gates, and with whom it is the object of conspirators and of *traitors* (for so he would call them) to unite? Upon these grounds he should vote in support of his Learned Friend.

*Mr. Erskine* said, that before he took notice of the arguments which had fallen from different Gentlemen in the course of the debate, he should first apply himself to the observations of his Learned Friend (*Mr. Hardinge*) who had just sat down, which were announced not as arguments, but as demonstrations. And the proposition demonstrated was, that there was nothing strange in a conspiracy without detected conspirators: And that, so far from thinking the acquittal material, he thought the mass of treason before the House in the Report more confirmed by them. *Mr. Erskine* said, that the last part of the demonstration was so perfectly beyond his apprehension, that he would not venture to meddle with it; and that, as to the first, he agreed with *Mr. Hardinge* that a conspiracy *in the abstract*, might for a long time exist without precisely known or convicted conspirators, or without even the qualities of the conspiracy itself being ascertained. But it should be recollected that the conspiracy charged by the Report, on which the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* proceeded, was a specific conspiracy to hold a Convention, and that the only evidence of it, which *Mr. Hardinge* held to be incontrovertible, were the letters and papers contained in the Report. If therefore these letters and papers had been discovered by Government, and the authors of them had been unknown, *Mr. Hardinge* would have made out his proposition, supposing the papers to contain treason. But what became of his demonstration when the authors of all of them had been known for above two years to Government, without any prosecution of any one man with effect? If the Report was a mass of treason, and the authors of every line in it were completely known to Government, how could the conspirators be said to be unknown? If the writings made out a conspiracy, they brought forward the conspirators at the same time; since their authors never for a moment concealed themselves, but avowed and gloried in their works.

*Mr. Erskine* then went through the heads of the evidence on the trials, and maintained that the verdicts negatived the conspiracy in every possible view of the subject; and he considered the jury, by their noble, manly, independent conduct, as the deliverers of their country. The debate, he said, of this night,

night, had had one good effect. He observed that Gentlemen had found that slighting expressions of juries would not be endured in silence in England, and he was glad to see that the jury had been treated with more respect, and the verdicts more delicately handled, than they had been upon a former night. Mr. Erskine, referring to the debate of the former evening, said, that no man received more satisfaction than he did at any tribute of respect to the abilities of the Learned Serjeant (Adair), for whom he always had entertained the highest regard. But that very regard became a source of mortification, when he saw him the other night earning the prostituted praises of corruption, by arguments unworthy of his talents, and the candour and liberality of his mind. The parts of his speech that deserved attention were heard only with silence; but the House was stunned with applauding clamour, when, in an unlawyer-like manner, he tagged together disjointed unconnected bits and scraps of the Crown's evidence to prove his proposition of guilt, leaving out all the explanatory context, and all the parole evidence, which gave the lie to the Crown's construction of the papers. How was he (Mr. E.), in answer to this unwarrantable proceeding, to answer the Serjeant? Could he drag their spies before the House, and expose them over again? Could he cross-examine the Crown's honest witnesses, whom they kept in prison till the trial, in the hearing of the House? Could he let the House hear their solemn denial of the treason? But, said the Serjeant on a former night, no wonder that traitors deny their treason. This was the way they got rid of the testimony of their honest witnesses, that their more honest and respectable ones, the loyal band of gentleman spies, might be masters of the field.

But he was loudly and repeatedly asked to account for these papers upon any other principle than the traitorous spirit imputed to them; he said he could do it without difficulty, and he was willing to allow that they were not the sentiments of a few obscure men, but of a large portion of the people of England, increasing in numbers every hour, and likely still to increase by the vote of this night. He believed all the papers were written to degrade and revile the House of Commons, and were dictated by a sense of the greatest contempt for, and indignation against its departure from its duty as the representatives of the people. The writers loved the British constitution, and therefore abhorred and treated with contempt all mockeries and abuses of its genuine principles. If that was dangerous, the cure was at hand—they had only to cease to deserve reproaches. Mr. Erskine said, he gave them, the House of Commons, the advice which Lord Chesterfield gave the

Lords

Lords on the debate for licensing the stage, when their Lordships were smarting under the lashes of the drama: "Let us," said Lord Chesterfield, "look into our own conduct, and we shall find the cause of what we complain of—let us amend our conduct, and we shall find the remedy." Is this a time, said Mr. Erskine, to treat the people with severity, and to repeal their most essential privileges, when your entire dependence (you know it to be true), when your very existence as a Government, depends wholly on their affections? What signify the insignia of your authority spread out before you, separated from the people's love?—Will they save you in the hour of calamity? He confessed that the consideration of the recent events of the world, had made an indelible impression on his mind. The world was become the stage of revolutions by the same distracted system of pride and coercion; the scenes shifted so fast as almost to lose their impression: By this system America was lost, and a new æra in the world commenced; the French revolution followed in its train. On the birth of that great event, instead of asserting our rank as a free nation, and giving liberty under our guardianship a salutary direction; we had thrown all Europe into convulsions, and contented ourselves with afterwards raving and railing at the disasters of our own delusion and madness. In the same manner the Imperial councils were conducted in Brabant; he had been eye-witness to them; the people clamoured for the *joyeuse entrée*, their ancient constitution, like the clamour of Reform in England: But the reformers were persecuted and punished, and all was peace in the idiot imagination of corrupt power. But when the French came on the frontier, the Austrian Government vanished like an enchantment; the Archduchess of Austria then sent to them on her flight from Brussels the *joyeuse entrée*, emblazoned in all the colours of the rainbow. But it was then not hers to give; the people preferred even foreign conquest to servitude under corruption, and the throne of that kingdom sunk to rise no more.

On the late trials at the Old Bailey, he had, *to the great offence of certain persons*, noticed these things, and was advancing to the late catastrophe of Holland, then fast approaching; but he had checked himself in the middle of a sentence, that he might not be considered as a prognosticator of evil. But now the sentence might too easily be finished: The same system, as true to produce its effects, as the most established causes in the whole round of Nature's philosophy, had now produced its consequences. The unhappy Princes of Holland were exiles on our shores, not from their own criminal dispositions, for he believed they were honourable men; but, like other

Princes, they had friends. Kings friends, he feared, would never be quiet till they had destroyed all kingly government in the world; for every loss of power and affection had uniformly arisen from their counsels. Let Kings have no friends but their People, and the People will support their Kings. Let them raise juntos, cabals against their People, and they will be one after another destroyed. No man, he said, had a greater affection for the King and his family, and a greater reverence for the constitution, than he had; and all he had said proceeded from affection for both. The best mark of honest friendship was to speak the truth; flatterers and sycophants gave temporary satisfaction, but produced final ruin.

*Serjeant Adair* said, after the abilities evinced by his Learned Friends, it would not be necessary for him to trespass long on the patience of the House. After the written evidence that had been adduced, it was, in his opinion, impossible that any individual could doubt the existence of a treasonable conspiracy. The Learned Gentleman who had just sat down, had complained that the evidence had been selected by scraps; yet the Learned Gentleman, instead of his proofs that no conspiracy had existed, had contented himself with reading a single letter. What were the proofs of his Learned Friend's position? He had rested them on that letter, and the declaration held out by the societies, namely, that they intended to effect a reform in the representation by legal and constitutional means. Because they chuse to make this declaration, is that a reason why this House should shut their eyes to the true meaning of those designs concealed under this specious veil? Were their proceedings on the 20th of January legal and constitutional means? Was their determination no more to petition Parliament, but to seek redress from their own laws, legal and constitutional means? Was their address to the Jacobins and the Convention legal and constitutional means? But his Learned Friend recoiled from his own argument; he had suppressed that verbal testimony which might have been obtained; what that verbal testimony was, he should submit to the House. The Learned Gentleman had himself cross-examined all the witnesses.

In two of the trials his Learned Friend did not care to call those witnesses who best knew the transaction, and yet his Learned Friend had pushed his cross-examination further than had ever been known upon former occasions. His Learned Friend had grounded his arguments against the written evidence upon the oral testimony, which it was contended was the true criterion of judging the intentions of the parties. Was not the question put by his Learned Friend to all the witnesses

nesses he had thought proper to call—"Was it your intention to overturn the constitution of the kingdom?" What answer could be given to such a question? Why did not his Learned Friend say at once—Are you a traitor? It was impossible, as the question was put, that any other answer could be given than such as his Learned Friend had expected; but why was not Hardy examined? His Learned Friend had threatened this, but his prudence had superseded the impulse of the moment; and although Hardy could have given much information, yet his Learned Friend, knowing the simplicity of Hardy's nature, did not chuse to call him, because Hardy knew too much. The Learned Serjeant replied to Mr. Erskine's arguments respecting the weight due to the verdict of a jury, but contended that that verdict could have no controul over the House in the exercise of their legislative functions. He said that his Learned Friend, at the trial of Hardy, in a speech of six hours, had chosen to occupy five hours and an half in extracts from Sidney and Locke, and only took up half an hour in replying to that which had occupied four days in stating, and had employed his Learned Friend, on the part of the Crown, nine hours in opening.

The Learned Serjeant next commented upon the evidence given by Broomhead, whose evidence had torn aside the veil; and from the transactions between him and York, and assembling of several thousand people, for the purpose of influencing their minds, added to the proceedings of the Scotch Convention, and their assuming the legislative functions of the country; from all these circumstances, the Learned Serjeant contended, the real intentions of these persons were sufficiently perspicuous. But it is the duty of this House, it is both generous and patriotic to the Public, to prevent those who are conspiring, from bringing their evil intention to such mischievous maturity as may render our efforts to crush it ineffectual. There are many cases which might occur, to prevent which, would require timely legislative interposition, that, nevertheless, are not high treason: Conspiring to levy war, for instance, is not high treason by the statute of Edward III. What then, are we to wait till war be actually levied, before we are suffered to adopt preventive interposition? The time to interpose is, when we have just grounds to suspect, and prevent the communication of that contagion which may endanger, and perhaps sacrifice, the lives of others.

In reply to what had been said by a Right Hon. Gentleman on a former debate, relative to the insignificance of the numbers, those numbers had only been insignificant from the timely interposition of Government. With respect to the

persons who had been acquitted, he had hoped those verdicts would have one good effect ; that they would have deterred those who had been treated with so much lenity by the laws, and make them be cautious how they again brought their lives into danger, by the pursuit of similar practices. The same Right Hon. Gentleman had also said, that he should not have hesitated in pronouncing the persons tried *Not Guilty* ; because, in the opinion of the Right Hon. Gentleman, the prosecutors had made out no case. Was that the fact ? did the jury think this was the fact ? They did not, for they hesitated in one of the trials two hours before they delivered their verdict. The jury, therefore, had no doubt of the existence of the conspiracy : and he hoped those who had received the benefit of their acquittal, would imitate the conduct of the Friends of the People, and not persist in groping like moles in the dark, lest they should meet with other juries not quite so lenient as those by whom they had been acquitted. These verdicts, the Learned Serjeant contended, would clear them up to that time for all charges of treason ; but if they persisted in their seditious practices, they would not be exempted from other charges of the same or a different nature, with an added load of responsibility from that which they have before done, and the lenity they had before experienced.

In reply to the arguments used by his Learned Friend (Mr. Erskine), great attention, he said, ought and had been paid to the wishes of the people of England, when the sense of the people was duly and properly collected. There was already a sufficient union between that House and the People ; and he conceived, instead of arguments merely to catch popularity, it would be more consistent with the dignity of that House, if such arguments were not used at all.

The Learned Serjeant concluded with observing, that he most heartily concurred in the continuation of that power in the hands of Government, which had not hitherto been abused ; he was bound to this from duty to the Public, regard to the laws, and to that liberty consistent with law and order which this country had ever enjoyed, and which he trusted would constitute strength in the country, to defy foreign and domestic enemies.

Mr. Fox said, he had come down to the House, full of curiosity, to hear what case would be made out to justify the renewal of the Bill ; although he had heard much declamation on the subject, in the preceding debates, he had found so little argument, that he conceived it must have been all reserved for the present occasion. In one respect his curiosity had been gratified. Some of the arguments were not only new, but the  
most

most extravagant perhaps ever uttered in a House of Parliament. The Attorney General had said that the object of the Bill was, not to give a power of taking into custody, and prosecuting persons who might be guilty of treason, but to give a power of arresting and confining persons in *inchoate guilt*, and preventing them from completing the crimes they would otherwise commit. This was a principle inconsistent with English law, as it wore a near resemblance to what had been the former, and was too much the present practice of a neighbouring country, which for several years had been paying the penalties, and expiating the crimes, of an absolute monarchy. This argument was not even supported by the Bill of last year; that went directly to the taking up and prosecuting of persons supposed to have committed acts of treason. To adopt such a system of prevention was to desert all the principles and policy of our ancestors, in favour of the infernal policy upon which the Bastiles and dungeons of tyranny had been peopled. It was to say, "We will take up men out of mercy and kindness, because we think them likely to commit crimes; but this very mercy shall immure them in prisons, and cut them off from society during our will and pleasure." Members of Parliament were excepted; but might not any other man be deprived of his liberty by the will or mistake of ministers, as much as by *lettres de cachet* in France formerly, or by any sudden seizure in any country where there existed a power of arbitrary imprisonment? It was said that no man would be taken into custody on suspicion of a crime of which he had been previously acquitted; but ministers, upon their own arguments, must consider the persons lately acquitted of treason as more likely than any other to commit acts of treason; and what security was there against seeing that which had been declaimed upon as the climax of French injustice, *viz.* men who had been acquitted and imprisoned as suspected? The whole went upon the new French principles, which characterized every new act of ministers, while they were holding them up as the grand object of alarm. What but caprice could prevent them from taking these men again into custody? They would not take up Hardy—Why? Because, when men abandoned the plain road of the constitution, they were involved in eternal contradictions. It was admitted that a conspiracy to levy war was not treason, and then it was asked, "Shall we not prevent the mischief by taking the parties into custody before war is actually levied?" The law said distinctly, You shall not take them into custody as guilty of treason; this was all the answer necessary to be given; and to say otherwise was to calumniate  
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the zeal of loyalty was exerted to burn the houses of Dissenters?

Mr. Fox, after pressing his argument in various other shapes, asked how any man of sense or humanity could talk of the persons lately acquitted, having experienced the mercy of their country. Was it mercy to be torn from their families, to be imprisoned for six months, and then turned out into the world again, their means of subsistence perhaps cut off? They had experienced the justice of this country in their acquittal; but to talk of mercy was an insult. He paid a handsome compliment to the character, abilities, and public services of Earl Mansfield, with respect to whom, he understood an appeal had been made to him. He concluded with observing, that the trial by jury, and the representation of the People in the House of Commons, were the corner-stones of the constitution. The latter, he had long been of opinion, stood in need of some reform; for although it was true that the House was capable of receiving an impression from the People, it had been most calamitously proved in the American war, that it did not receive that impression soon enough; and there were cases, such as the present war, still more calamitous, in which time was every thing, and delay might involve House, Lords, King, and People, in one common ruin.

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that supposing the danger to exist, the only questions were, whether the remedy proposed was applicable to the danger, and whether the application of it was likely to produce evil consequences? It was neither a deviation from the policy of our ancestors, nor a desertion of the principles of the constitution; but a constitutional remedy often applied in cases of adequate danger, and fortunately always with the best effects. Was such a conspiracy as had been so often and so ably described, a case to which it was less applicable than any of those to which it had been applied in former times? Did a case in which opinions of the most poisonous nature were circulated, with every degree of art, through every channel, when the most extraordinary exertions were made to put in motion a machine, the dreadful effects of which had been but too fatally experienced in another country, less demand vigorous and effective means of prevention than others, where, although the danger was great, it was not so active? Preventing the commission of crimes, which, if not prevented, it might be too late to punish, was the distinct character of the Bill.—This, it was said, was like the old policy of France, or like the  
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the new system of Robespierre ; but let it be remembered, that by this prevention the House of Orange in the first instance, and the House of Brunswick in the second, had been maintained upon the throne. In France, persons acquitted of imputed crimes, were imprisoned as suspected ; here, and under the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act, they were enlarged. The circumstances of the time demanded that a discretionary power should be given to ministers, and there was no reason to fear that it would be abused any more than it had been upon former occasions. No man would carry the plea of *Autrefois acquit* so far as to say, that it should operate as an indemnity for all future offences ; and therefore if any of the persons lately acquitted should be found pursuing such measures as those for which they had been tried, they would be as liable to be taken into custody as any other. A power must be given by the Bill to commit on something less than legal proof of treason, or the Bill itself must be nugatory. Conspiring to levy war was, by several temporary acts of the Legislature, a substantive treason ; and in particular cases, such as if the conspiracy took effect, as it must endanger the life of the Sovereign, by the stream of authorities for more than a century, it was an overt-act of treason. The Bill was, therefore, a measure of sound precaution, both for the individuals who might engage in such designs, but above all for the Public. Even where persons were committed on legal proof of treason, it might take much time to explore all the connexions and ramifications of the guilt, and consequently much time before the offender could be brought to trial, consistent with a due regard to the public safety. The alleged disrespect for the verdict of a jury proceeded on a misconstruction of words. It was no disrespect to say, that different juries might draw different conclusions from the same facts, or that a jury might have been misled by an advocate's eloquent and powerful statement of the law of treason.

He next examined whether a conspiracy of such magnitude as to call for the remedy proposed had been proved. He went over the history of the series of relative transactions on which the trials were founded, and imputed different views and intentions to the societies. To all this, he said, no answer had been given ; but he heard with grief an Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Fox), who claimed the character of the champion of the constitution, say, that from all this he felt no alarm. He had heard it indeed with the less surprise, because he had observed from session to session, and from day to day, Gentlemen on the other side of the House, with more or less

caution, decrying the danger to be apprehended from French principles. He recurred again to the machinations of the disaffected, which, he said, the speeches of Gentlemen on the other side of the House rendered still more dangerous, and still more necessary to be guarded against, by the sound part of the House, and of the country. All the facts charged in the Report of the Secret Committee had, he observed, been admitted by the advocate for the accused, to have been proved upon their trials, and the verdicts of the juries he contended were not conclusive—[Here Mr. Morris Robinson called the Right Hon. Gentleman to order.] The Hon. Gentleman knew as little of his duty as a Member of Parliament, as of the functions of a jury, if he would venture to maintain that its verdict was conclusive upon Parliament, with respect to any measures of precaution Parliament might think proper to adopt. To refuse to continue the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act, would be to declare that all the acts proved upon the trials were innocent. He descanted on the situation into which French principles had brought Europe, and on the singular union of sentiment between Parliament and the People, with respect to the internal danger of the country, declaring that there never were better grounds of confidence in our proceedings than at the present moment, whence it was obvious, that the people would not be wanting to them, if they were not wanting to themselves.

*Mr. Morris Robinson* said, that notwithstanding the high tone in which he had been rebuked, he must still maintain, that a conspiracy, upon which the legal inquest of the country had passed, and found not proved, ought not to be said to be proved.

*Mr. Fox* spoke in explanation to two or three points. The Right Hon. Gentleman had talked of his decrying the danger from French principles, as if meaning to convey, that he approved of those principles.—No: So far was this from being true, that he considered what the people of England had had an opportunity of seeing, the pernicious effects of those principles, as the best security that they would not adopt them.

*The Secretary at War* said he could not be silent, when emissaries from the House laid hold of words, and tortured them into false meanings; when he considered what a handle had been made of what he once uttered in the House, though none of the Gentlemen on the other side, in denying it, proved the converse of the proposition. What he meant was—*Perish Commerce—live the Constitution.* Again, in the words  
acquitted

acquitted felons, that he had used, he did not mean the expression as throwing moral turpitude on the persons acquitted.

Mr. Grey apologised for obtruding upon the attention of the House at so late an hour, which he should not have done. but that the Right Hon. Gentleman had, in his usual strain, accused his Right Hon. Friend of exultation at the acquittal of those persons who lately were convicted. He remarked, that the Right Hon. Gentleman and his friends had never spoken of those persons, except in terms scarcely less qualified than felons. He was perfectly assured that it was the right of that House to examine into the verdicts of juries; but he reminded the House, that such examinations ought never to be made but with the utmost degree of delicacy and caution. When they were concerned in measures which related to transactions of a very different complexion to what they had imagined, it became them to give those transactions a cool and deliberate reconsideration. The treasons for which the *Habeas Corpus Act* was last year suspended, he observed, were judged of from *ex parte* evidence; and therefore it was extremely important, upon a motion for a re-suspension of that Act, to proceed upon sufficient grounds, and not to maintain an opinion, which has, in some instances, been contradicted, without an impartial and thorough investigation.

If it were not so late, he said, he should follow the Right Hon. Gentleman through many of his arguments; as it was, he should only examine a few. If he were disposed, like the Right Hon. Gentleman, to treat others of an opposite opinion in a contemptuous and uncivil manner, he should not follow him in any. The Right Hon. Gentleman had mentioned, that precedents could be adduced from the Revolution, and even in the very best periods of the Constitution, when upon a similar necessity the *Habeas Corpus Act* had been suspended. Mr. Grey called upon the Right Hon. Gentleman in consequence to state any period, except in circumstances of actual danger, when the pressure and necessity were really urgent, or where plots of a treasonable nature against the life and person of the King were manifest. He wished the fact to be proved.

In reply to another part of the Right Hon. Gentleman's declamation, he confessed his Hon. Friend had admitted that the papers on the table were published by the persons who were tried; and what then? Unless they were really guilty of high treason, they could not be comprehended within the intention of that Act by which the *Habeas Corpus Act* was suspended. The question then was, whether those persons

were guilty of high treason, and that charge, he insisted, had been completely negatived. It did not become the House to forget its duty, nor to forget that nothing new had been offered to support the proposition for the re-suspension of the Act.

In the eloquent declamation which the Hon. Gentleman had made, he had stated the expediency of it as a necessity for guarding against Jacobinism and French principles, because there would otherwise be a probable danger of seducing the people from their duty and allegiance by the rapid and successful progress those principles were making. He begged leave to apply an expression in answer to this sentiment of an Hon. Gentleman who did not now retain a seat in that House (Mr. Burke), upon the rebellion in America. That Gentleman then told the House to recollect, that "*General rebellions are not encouraged, but provoked!*" "And so," continued Mr. Grey, "do I affirm, that in general the people are not *seduced* from their allegiance, but *provoked*."

If any discontent has been raised in the country, it could not be by Paine's and Barlow's books, without a previous cause; but the discontent must have been excited by the Government.

—————"For love of grace,  
 "Lay not that flattering unction to your soul,  
 "That not your trespass, but my madness, speaks;  
 "It will but skin and film the ulcerous place;  
 "While rank corruption, mining all within,  
 "Infects unseen."

Let us review the discontent of France at the time of the revolution. That could not be suffered to proceed for want of power or imprisonment. There was authority and a Bastille. Let us review the conduct and motives of the Dutch:—They have been accused of supineness: They were not supine, let us remember, under the oppressive tyranny of Philip the Second; nor would they have been supine now, if they had not wanted cause for exertion. The fact was, they were weary of their government, and no longer thought it worth defending. It was indifferent to them whether they received a foreign power, or were subjected by a domestic one; and this ought to be the inference we should draw, and it should serve as a practical lesson to us.

"I am much surprised," continued Mr. Grey, "that watch-words should be complained of, when the Hon. Gentleman has availed himself of those worn-out watch-words,

*French principles*, and *Jacobinism*, to support his desperate and corrupt measures. I acknowledge (said he), that they may excite the idea of danger when alarm ought to be diminished ;” but he hoped the period was not far distant, when the Constitution would be restored to that ancient and beautiful form from which the Right Hon. Gentleman had reduced it. He said he should give his negative to the motion, because he approved of that old exploded doctrine, that “ the *Habeas Corpus* Act ought never to be suspended, except in cases of actual or very imminent danger.”

One remark appeared yet necessary upon the responsibility which the Right Hon. Gentleman had pretended, when he called upon the House to repose its confidence in the measures of Administration. When ministers claim the confidence of the House upon light and trivial occasions, Mr. Grey asserted they were entitled to no confidence ; and when he asserted this, he did it because there had not appeared to him one clear, demonstrative, and sufficient argument, to justify the disposal of so much power in the hands of the King.

Colonel Ralle recommended the division upon the renewal of an Act for the Suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act at a former period (we believe in the year 1754) to be read, when the Ayes were 71, and the Noes 13. He did this, he said, that the people might know what the opinions of that House formerly were upon a similar occasion.

The question being loudly called for, from every quarter of the House, a division took place :

<i>Ayes</i>	-	-	230
<i>Noes</i>	-	-	53

Majority 177

The Bill was then read a second time : After which a warm and long conversation took place between *the Attorney General*, *Mr. Erskine*, *Mr. Sheridan*, *Mr. Fox*, *the Chancellor of the Exchequer*, and *Mr. Dundas*, on the question, whether they should go into the Committee on the Bill at that late hour (three o'clock in the morning) ; which at length was terminated by ministers agreeing to go into the Committee on Tuesday, with a declaration that they would go through the remaining stages of the Bill on that day and Wednesday, so as to send it to the Lords on Wednesday.

Adjourned at half past three in the morning.

*Minority on the Debate of a Motion made to read a second time the Bill for further suspending the Habeas Corpus Act.*

Antonie, Lee  
 Anson, Thomas  
 Aubrey, Sir John  
 Bouverie, Hon. E.  
 Burch, J. R.  
 Byng, George  
 Cavendish, Lord J. H.  
 Church, J. B.  
 Coke, T. W.  
 Coke, Edward  
 Colhoun, William  
 Courtenay, John  
 Crewe, John  
 Cuiwen, Christian  
 Erskine, Hon. Thomas  
 Edwards, G. N.  
 Featherston, Sir Henry  
 Fitzpatrick, General  
 Fletcher, Sir Henry  
 Foley, Hon. Edward  
 Fox, Rt. Hon. C. J.  
 Francis, Philip  
 Hare, James  
 Harrison, John  
 Harcourt, John  
 Howard, Henry  
 Jekyll, Joseph

Jervoise, C. Jervoise  
 St. John, St. Andrew  
 Lambton, William Henry  
 Lemon, Sir William  
 Maitland, Hon. Thomas  
 McLeod, Colonel N.  
 North, Dudley  
 Peirce, Henry  
 Plumer, William  
 Powlett, Powlett  
 Rawdon, Hon. John  
 Robinson, Morris  
 Russell, Lord William  
 Spencer, Lord Robert  
 Shawe, Stewart  
 Smith, William  
 Sturt, Charles  
 Tarleton, General  
 Thorold, Sir John  
 Thompson, Thomas  
 Townshend, Lord John  
 Walwyn, James  
 Wharton, John  
 Whitbread, Samuel, jun.  
 Whitmore, Thomas  
 Wynne, R. W.

## TELLERS.

Grey, Charles

| Sheridan, R. B.

Total—55.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS.

MONDAY, Jan. 26.

*Mr. Baldwin* took the oaths and his seat for the borough of Malton, in the county of York.

*Mr. Alderman Anderson* presented a petition from the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Livery of the City of London, in Common-Hall assembled, of which the following is the substance :

“ That your petitioners deplore the evil consequences of war in general, but more particularly the calamitous effects of the present war, on the trade, manufactures, and commerce of the British empire.

“ Your petitioners conceive, that none of the ends proposed by the present war either have been, or are likely to be obtained, although it has been carried on at an unprecedented expence to this country, and has already produced

indeed an alarming increase of the national debt, augmented by subsidies to allies, who have not fulfilled their solemn engagements, or rendered adequate service for large sums actually received by them.

"Your petitioners, from their present view of public measures, presume humbly, but firmly, to express to this Honourable House their decided conviction, that the principle upon which the war appears now to be carried on, neither is nor can be essential to the prosperity, the liberty, or the glory of the British empire.

"Your petitioners, therefore, humbly pray, that this Honourable House, disclaiming all right of interfering in the internal concerns of France, will be pleased to take such measures as they, in their wisdom, shall think proper for the purpose of promoting a speedy peace between Great Britain and the Power with whom we are at war."

Ordered to lie on the table.

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* moved, "That the Chaplain do preach before this House at St. Margaret's Church, on Friday, the 30th of January."—Ordered.

*General Smith* wished to know what measures had been taken with respect to officers in India? This was a question which he had put to the Right Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Dundas) last year, who had then promised that something should be done: As he did not know whether any measure had been taken, he was under the necessity of renewing his question; he hoped these officers would not be suffered to languish from year to year, without some steps being taken to relieve them.

*Mr. Secretary Dundas* said, he was disposed to give the question of the Hon. General the most explicit answer which he was able to give; and he hoped the Hon. General had heard out of doors enough to shew him, that he had not himself been inactive upon the subject. Lord Cornwallis had been referred to upon that matter; the Noble Marquis had considered the whole, and had made his report upon it, in which there were many suggestions, which, he had no doubt, would prove useful. He had his Majesty's command to lay that report before the Court of Directors; he had also had private communications with several officers. It was, however, a question of very great magnitude, and on which he feared there would be much difference of opinion. Lord Cornwallis and the Court of Directors had already differed in some respects; and the officers did not entirely agree with either.

Mr. Dundas said, he ought not to say much of himself; but he could safely assert, that he had not been guilty of any inattention or delay; he had been considering the information which the report returned by the Court of Directors contained, and which he received no longer ago than last Saturday; it

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was an arduous task, and he would go through his duty respecting it as well as he was able. He trusted that something might be done, even in the present year, so that the officers in India might have some information on the arrival there of the next fleet.

*Mr. Francis* agreed with the Secretary of State, that this was a very important question, but he was sorry to hear that so much difference of opinion prevailed on the subject; it was unfortunate that such should be the case, after so much consideration had been given to the subject. He hoped that the Right Hon. Gentleman would lay the report he alluded to before the House.

*General Smith* then moved—"That an humble Address be presented to his Majesty, praying that he would be graciously pleased to give directions that there be laid before this House the petitions of the Officers belonging to the East India Company's service."

*Mr. Secretary Dundas* said, he had no objection to this motion, but he doubted extremely how far that would bring about the object which he believed the Hon. General to have in view.

The motion was put and carried.

*Mr. Francis* suggested that it might be proper to lay before the House, a copy of the report to which the Right Hon. Gentleman alluded.

*Mr. Secretary Dundas* said, he apprehended it to be quite unusual to lay before the House an instrument of that kind.

*Mr. Francis* saw nothing extraordinary in calling for the production of such an instrument: However, as it was objected to, it was a matter which, he said, he would not press.

*Mr. Sheridan* reminded Gentlemen on the opposite side of the House, that an order had been made for producing a copy of a Commission, under which Sir Gilbert Elliot acted as Viceroy of Corsica. He did not observe, that such order had been yet complied with.

*Mr. Secretary Dundas* said, he held in his hand the very paper which the Hon. Gentleman alluded to, and, with his permission, it should be laid upon the table.

The paper was read, and it appeared to contain a memorandum, that Sir Gilbert Elliot had no salary, as yet, as Viceroy of Corsica.

*Mr. Sheridan* said, that an opportunity might occur for having a complete explanation of this matter. He observed, that the memorandum just produced stated, that hitherto Sir Gilbert Elliot had not received any salary as Viceroy of Corsica. That there was to be a salary, and that too to be paid out

out of the pockets of the people of this country, he took for granted. That, however, was a subject which might be discussed hereafter.

#### MR. GREY'S MOTION.

*Mr. Grey* rose in consequence of the notice he had given of the motion which he intended to make; a motion which, he confessed, was unusual in point of form, and unusual as to the mode of bringing it forward. He had to bring before the House a question, in its nature and in its consequences one of the most important respecting which that House had ever exercised its deliberation or its power. It was not, like many other subjects, which were frequently, perhaps too often, agitated within those walls. It was not merely a dispute between two opposite sides, who should have the conduct and the direction of public affairs—not a question on any such narrow ground, not a question governed by principles of prejudice or party—it was not a question whether this or that denomination of men should hold or contend for a transfer of the power of Administration—not whether it should continue in one set of men, or should go into other hands—it was a question of much greater magnitude and importance; it was to be decided on the broad basis of national interest, as it affected the happiness, the safety, possibly the very existence of this country. If in the course of debates since the period in which this calamitous war commenced, any thing of animosity had occurred; if passions had misled some persons to interest themselves in behalf of this war, and had influenced them to desire to carry it on; if individuals had been deluded into it by false alarms—the case was at this time entirely changed; it had become a matter of serious alarm to every man who had good wishes for the welfare of this country. If that House was what it professed to be—the real guardian of the public safety; if it intended to act in its true character; it would consider the subject with the utmost attention; if they would act with the feeling and temper of good men, they would reflect on the importance of the subject, and remember that not only the money, but also the lives of thousands awaited the decision of that night.

After two years war, marked with a mixture of brilliant successes and mortifying disasters, both of which had contributed to drain this country of its blood and of its treasure, we were not one point nearer to the object for which it was said to be undertaken, than at the moment of its commencement. A melancholy reflection this; still more so when the lives of perhaps 50,000 of our countrymen had been sacrificed, and when we had so enormously increased the national debt; a

debt which had contributed so much, and which would contribute much more, to damp the ardour, cramp the genius, and check the industry of all ranks and descriptions of people in this country. Melancholy indeed was this reflection, since if the war were to subside that day, we should have added to our national debt, perhaps *seventy millions of money*. The Right Honourable Gentleman seemed not to assent to this. He believed it was not an exaggerated account, but in order to avoid disputes upon the sum, he would state it at fifty millions; that he knew was below the mark, but he was content to take it at that amount. Surely then it became the House to deliberate again and again before they added to a burden already so enormous; it became them to pause before they proceeded one step further, where the issue was in itself so hazardous, and the loss so large and certain.

The proposition that he had to bring forward; Mr. Grey said, was one, respecting which every Member in the House had had an opportunity of forming a judgment; because when he gave his notice he not only explained the nature of the subject, but stated to the House the very terms of his motion; and that no ambiguity should be found in any branch of the subject, he had also stated the substance of what he conceived to be the minister's avowed opinion as to a form of government in France, with which this country might safely and honourably treat. He should re-state, as well as he was able, the words of that Right Honourable Gentleman. He (the minister) had said, "that in regard to the government with which we should treat, the best terms of security (he believed he added, the most satisfactory) were in his opinion to be obtained from a monarchy founded on something like the basis of the old government of France; that he conceived it would be possible for this country to treat with a republic, but that with the present government of France we could not treat, nor ought we to treat, for we were not yet so reduced for want of resources as to make it necessary for us to negotiate with them, and there was nothing in the aspect of their resources which made them formidable to us." According to that declaration, it was evident, Mr. Grey said, that the war was a war *usque ad internecionem*, and that nothing short of the utter ruin of this country would induce the minister to treat for peace. This he understood to be the meaning, and this he feared might be the effect of the Right Honourable Gentleman's sentiments upon that subject, if that House should be pleased implicitly to adopt them. Sentiments such as these were indeed alarming, when it was reflected that they came from a person, in whose hands the direction of public affairs

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was placed, and on whose opinion, should the House support it, the dreaded issue of this war depended. This opinion; however, had not yet been countenanced by the House of Commons. He hoped it never would, and he would endeavour to bring a question forward which should, as fairly as possible, put that point in issue. He hoped it was an opinion the Right Honourable Gentleman himself would abandon, and he trusted that if the minister should still persist in it, the House would never countenance such a sentiment.

When he gave his notice of the motion with which he should conclude, he asked the minister if the wording of the motion was fair and satisfactory to him, adding, at the same time, that if any other terms were necessary, he had no objection to their being inserted. The Right Honourable Gentleman declared, he thought the motion perfectly fair, and expressed himself satisfied with the terms of it. The point here, therefore, was plain and explicit, and no man, by agreeing to his motion, would acknowledge any thing which that House had denied; indeed the point to be discussed, was so clear, so simple and intelligible, that the minister having agreed to put it upon that issue, stood directly pledged to come to a decisive vote upon the question. This was an occasion in which the feelings of the House were most warmly engaged, and he would venture to say, that if they felt collectively as a body, what he was sure they felt individually as men, all reserve would be set aside, all animosity avoided, all artifice would be abandoned, all that mystery which sometimes obscured political points would be removed and at an end, the House would not shun the question, but would come forward honestly at once, and give their real opinion. This it was their duty to do, as they should remember they were to decide on the lives of a multitude of their countrymen. He would again say, it was absolutely necessary, that the House of Commons should deal fairly and frankly with the country, and not conceal from the people the danger which threatened: Without frankness and fair dealing, the House of Commons would neither have, nor deserve to have, any respect from them; more especially so when they were voting away the money, and sacrificing the lives, of their constituents. It was a question, on the issue of which even the French had a right to expect the House to come to a decision; they had a right to expect it of the justice and the candour of the British House of Commons, because the people of France ought to know explicitly against what it is that they are fighting—they ought to know whether, in the opinion of that House, they had a right, which he would contend, as a general principle, every nation under Heaven

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had,

had, viz. the right of determining what form of government they shall have. It would also be conducive on this score to be explicit in our declarations—namely, by holding out a placable disposition; it would give them an opportunity of seeing, whether they are misled by their own rulers, should they shew an aversion to a pacific system. So far did he think that we should not adopt as a principle that we could not make peace with the present government of France, that we should ourselves in reality make some proposition with a view to the attainment of it. Another reason why the question which he should propose should be met by an explicit vote—it was necessary on account of the situation of the minister himself; it was as important to him that he should not be deceived, as it was important to the country that he should not deceive the House. It was necessary that he should know whether the House was willing to go on with a *bellum internecinum*, as he had on former occasions stated this war to be; and by his conduct since the commencement of it, he had incurred a severe responsibility, which was every hour increasing. It was necessary the House should understand the minister, and that the minister should understand the House; that he should know clearly and explicitly what sort of support the House intended to give him during the continuance of the war.—His proposition, Mr. Grey said, was framed with a view to all these points; it was plain, simple, and intelligible. It did not go to the full extent of his own opinion upon the subject. The effect of his motion went not the length, of declaring that we shall, or even that we ought to negotiate at the present crisis, but simply to say that negotiation at this time is not precluded by the form of the government of France. If he were to act up to his own opinion, he should make his motion in much broader terms, and say, that, under all the existing circumstances, it was the duty of the minister of this country to proceed without delay to a negotiation; but this his motion did not prescribe; all that his motion went to effect, was merely to put this country and France in a negotiable state. It would be nothing more, if carried, than a Parliamentary declaration that the form of government in France was not a bar to negotiation on the part of this country. It did not proceed to tell ministers what he might think their duty; it merely aimed at putting the affairs of the two nations in such a state as to facilitate negotiation; or, in other words, to render it possible for the French, if so disposed, to agree to negotiate with us.

This, then, being the question, he should hope that the pledge which the minister had entered into for meeting this subject

subject fairly, would be acted up to, that the House should come to a conclusion upon the issue of it, and that the question should not be evaded. He was told, upon former occasions, that the question between this country and France, was not to be considered as a dispute between nations at war upon the ordinary causes of contest, but as a war of a particular and extraordinary nature. Unfortunately that was true; but yet we ought to know the specific object of hostilities, and then we should consider what prospect there was of our future success from reflecting upon the effect of our past endeavours, and thus it would become a question how far it would be politic to continue hostilities. But the question, unfortunately for the country, could hardly be said to be of that nature. He was told, when the dispute arose, there were several causes for the commencement of the war; he was told when hostilities commenced, and he had heard but little more to inform him upon that subject since, that the fall of the government of France was essential to the safety of our own; that their government was in direct hostility to ours, and that their success was incompatible with our security. He had no doubt but that he should be told the same thing again, and that it might be insisted upon, and therefore we could not at present negotiate. Nor had he any doubt, but that an attempt would be made to tell the House, that their former decisions were tantamount to this. He did not think that such could fairly be said to be the effect of any of the decisions of that House. If we could go back to a situation to which the minister would be glad to recur, namely, the time when we were at peace, and who, if he had the opportunity, would observe a conduct directly the reverse of that he had pursued, we should find the House of Commons in express terms thanking his Majesty for abstaining from all interference with the affairs of the French nation. This was in the month of December 1792, long after the King of France had been deposed, and the French had established a republican form of government; and also after many of the excesses for which the French had been so much and so deservedly blamed, had been committed. Mr. Grey read part of the Address to his Majesty in answer to his Speech from the Throne at the meeting of Parliament in 1792. He did this, he said, in order to shew that the conduct of the French was as objectionable, and as revolting to our feelings, at that time as it had been since or could be at present; and yet the House of Commons were then of opinion that the form of government of France was not incompatible with our safety. Nor did he know of any thing since in which the House of Commons had given a contrary opi-

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nion. He had heard indeed many arguments urged to support a contrary opinion; but he did not remember any decision of that House by which that opinion had been negatived, and therefore he did not mean that day to propose any thing that could be deemed incompatible with what the House had already done. It was for the House to consider whether they would countenance to its full extent, the opinion which the minister had often expressed upon the subject, and whether they would take from the Right Hon. Gentleman, and impose upon themselves, the great responsibility which had hitherto been attached to Administration only. He would ask the House to reflect upon the situation of the present war, and on the manner in which it had been commenced. It was true that the declaration of the war originated in France; but did that decide the question of, Who in reality commenced the contest? Did we not refuse all satisfaction to France after complaints were stated? Did we not send away one of their ministers, and refuse to receive another? Was therefore the mere declaration of war the commencement of hostilities? Most indubitably it was not. For these reasons he regarded the war as a war of aggravation on our part, without showing to the French how it might have been avoided, or how it could be discontinued, by which means there was a complete bar to all treaty; to take away that bar was the only object of his motion.

How far the object of the war on our part, as explained by the minister, was attainable, and how far, under the present circumstances, it was politic for this country to pursue it; Mr. Grey said, were points which ought to be maturely considered. If the House was indeed of opinion that the very existence of this country depended on our being able to force the French to abandon their present form of government; however distant and vain the hope might seem to him, he could have nothing to offer against our trying to accomplish it, for he had no doubt that the House and the country must determine to make every sacrifice in their power; but he believed that the existence of the government of France was not incompatible with the safety of this country, nor essential to its permanence, and he was happy to say, he saw nothing that ought to preclude our treating with them.

In examining this question he said he should not deem it necessary to inquire into a point which had been often insisted upon, namely, that one nation in some cases has a right to interfere with the form of the government of another. As a general proposition he was ready to say he could not admit the right which one nation had to interfere with the government

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of another—but in certain particular cases, he thought the proposition might be admitted; he nevertheless begged it to be understood that he did not subscribe to the doctrine of interference with the governments of states to an unqualified extent. It was not, however, to be denied, that, generally speaking, a nation has a right to form its own government for itself, and other nations have no right to interpose; that was not a question into which the discussion of this subject would properly lead; for supposing the destruction of the present government of France to be a desirable object for this country, it became us, before we should set about it, to inquire into the prospect which we had of succeeding in the attempt, and to ask ourselves whether the probability of accomplishing it was equal to the hazard of the enterprise. Here he must confess the view was unfavourable. He did not wish to dwell on the circumstances of the war, because they were fresh in the recollection of every Member in the House, and because they were, the latter part of them, so extremely disastrous, that no man of any feeling or sensibility could review them without concern, or without feeling deeply for the fate of this country; he feared they proved but an indifferent source of consolation to those who had predicted a favourable issue to our contest. He had heard with surprise the foundation which the minister laid for our success in the termination of the present war; *viz.* the weakness of the French, and the strength of Great Britain. He was astonished, he repeated, at hearing this sort of argument; that was the ground, however, on which this question should be considered, and that was divided into two branches—the chance of a counter-revolution in France, and the reduced state of their resources.—With regard to a counter-revolution to be effected by force of arms, was it necessary that such a position should be argued at all? Was it necessary to recapitulate the circumstances which made up our daily experience upon the subject? It was undoubtedly true that the present government of France had countenanced and committed the most horrid acts of cruelty and murder; but was it doubted, that with all its excesses, all its factious contentions in the capital, all its shifting of power from one set of men to another, the mass of the people were firmly attached to that government; and if so, could it become a question whether the moderation which that government had lately shewn, would diminish that attachment? The truth was, and it would be criminal to attempt to conceal it, the people of France detested the very idea of a monarchy at this moment; and whatever might be the defects of their republican form of government, a republic they were determin-

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ed to have, and it was not in our power to prevent it. A republic, one and indivisible, was the object of their choice, and that object, whatever the minister of this country might think or say they would at all hazards maintain; that would be the established form of government in France, at least by force we should never be able to prevent it. This opinion he had formed at an early period of the contest, and every event which had happened since, had confirmed that opinion. He professed himself ready to admit, that those who avow a contrary opinion, were not inconsistent with their premises, for they allege, that the French revolution was brought about by the people having perused republican writings. On the contrary, he maintained that the French revolution was not the result of the theory and speculation of philosophers, but that it arose out of the hardships and misery which made the French hate and detest the tyranny and despotism to which it was owing. It was ridiculous to say that any people will revolt under a good government, merely to try the effect of theory and speculation. Those who were of that opinion were unacquainted with the character of man. He should like to see the page in any history in this world, where the mass of a people had revolted from the government under which they enjoyed protection. In reality, mankind in general were bent the other way; they were fond of a government, and sometimes blind to its defects, while they were conscious they were protected by it. He was sorry to say that he was afraid this was not always the case with governments; those who managed them were sometimes not satisfied with the affection and obedience of the people; they would but too frequently plunder and insult them: He was sorry to say also, that governments in general seemed not to grow wise by experience; and this was most unfortunately true in the history of revolutions. Those who have taken an accurate view of the American revolution and that of France, cannot but see the strict similarity they bear to each other. Oppression was the cause of both. It had been thought that the revolution of America might have taught the ministers a lesson not to proceed as they are now doing. Had that been the case? Let them see a little how they stood, and how the facts were upon which they ought to form their judgments. Three campaigns had passed—Had we gained any thing?—We were once so forward, that, in the opinion of an Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Jenkinson), we might be able to march triumphantly to Paris; and, although he was not so sanguine as that Hon. Gentleman, he believed at one time there was some idea that the allies might subdue the French, and that he believed might have been apprehended in the  
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National Convention; at least certain it was, they thought their situation a very serious one. But had we gained one inch subsequent to that period? We had at one time made an impression on the side of Alsace—Had we gained any thing in that quarter since? Let Gentlemen recollect La Vendée, Lyons, Toulon, and Marseilles.—What had been the consequence of the insurrection in those places; was it favourable to us?—We had possession of the port of Toulon, as it was once said, by the affection of its inhabitants, and the hatred they entertained for the French republic; but it had since appeared, that it was by the treachery of a few persons. Had we gained a single man in favour of our cause by that event?—If we looked to the south of France for an insurrection, what prospect had we of acquiring any thing by it? There we should see the main body of the people reconciled and attached to the present government. In truth, they were united to their government, and gave it extraordinary energy from a sense of common danger; that was sure to be the case in every government—was it not at this very moment the case in our own? Did we not see the hands of Government strengthened every hour even upon the bare suspicion of a common danger? Had not the *Habeas Corpus* Act, the pride of Englishmen, been suspended on that idea? Was it therefore the less likely to be the case in France, under all its circumstances, than in any other country? With regard to any possible hope of a counter-revolution in France, the question was at an end, either by force of arms or otherwise.

The next point which had been insisted upon by the minister as a reason why we should expect success in the present war, Mr. Grey said, was the want of resources on the part of the French; that Right Hon. Gentleman had stated, that the French finances were so exhausted, that he could prove from calculation, they could not continue the war much longer. He had heard much upon this sort of reasoning founded upon calculations of the strength of states. He had heard it from the commencement of the present war down to that moment, and yet the French had been successful in proportion as we had depreciated their power. He had heard it in his Majesty's Speech. [He read part of the King's Speech of last year.] That was the language in the year 1794, and such was the language at present.—But the history of the world proved the fallacy of this mode of argument. They were told of the progressive and rapid decay of the resources of the French. Precisely in the same style had the House of Commons been addressed in the year 1777, when the American war was hardly begun, and upon that occasion a speech was made by a person

(the late Lord Chatham), to whose authority the Right Hon. Gentleman would certainly pay some attention. That great statesman had then asked, "Where is the man with the forehead to promise or hope for success in such a situation? or from perseverance in the measures that have driven us to it? Who has the forehead to do so? Where is that man? I should be glad to see his face."

They all knew the Americans had issued a great quantity of paper money, and they were said on that account to want resources; it was therefore insisted that they must fail. It had then also been stated by way of proof of that assertion, that the debts of the Americans would amount to sixty-six millions sterling, and that the whole value of the fee simple of their estates did not amount to more than thirty-three millions. Such were the arguments at that day, and such they were at present; this was the misfortune of having the affairs of the nation in the hands and under the direction of men who were unable to distinguish between the fallacy of such calculations and the energy and enthusiasm of a people struggling for what appeared to them to be their freedom, and of our being governed by men who thought that their knowledge upon such topics was superior to all that was to be collected from the history of nations. If that statement of American resources was compared with those of France, it would be found, that, even upon that calculation, there was a prodigious advantage in favour of France. [*Mr. Grey quoted the report and speech of Johannot on the subject of their finances to the French Convention, in support of his argument in favour of the resources of France.*] The most exaggerated account that had been given of the probable debt of France amounted only to four hundred and twenty millions (about one hundred millions beyond the truth), and the value of their landed estate was admitted to be above six hundred millions sterling.—What, then, was to be said on the question of calculation, especially when they all knew that the French were now adding the riches of whole nations to their wealth; when they have a Bank in their possession, which was once said to be so closely connected with ours, that the Bank of England and that Bank were one and the same thing? But this, in truth, great and mighty as the advantage was in favour of the French, was not the real way to estimate the resources of a people who, in a state of revolution, were contending, as they thought, for their liberties and lives. They were not to be measured by the common efforts of a people; for while there was iron in the bowels, or grass upon the surface of the earth, there was no end to their resources. Besides, if the population of France was looked to,

to, it would be found that it amounted to one sixth of the whole of Europe; add to this, the distracted and impoverished state of the allies, and then he believed, no man in his senses would think of success in another campaign against them; for it was clear, however desirable the thing might be, it was impossible to conquer a nation determined and ready to spend their last shilling, and sacrifice their last man; for the establishment of their republican system.

With regard to our own resources, he believed them, as the Right Hon. Gentleman had stated them to be, very great; equal, certainly, to every thing to which they ought to be applied; but not equal to the conquest of France, or to the carrying on a war of aggression, for so he must again state this war to be, as it was avowedly for the destruction of the government of France. He would repeat it, that whatever we might think of ourselves, we had not, nor could we in the nature of things have, in the prosecution of this war, the energy and spirit of the French, for they must fight while there was a man or a shilling left.—What were our resources? Had the Emperor improved them? Let them look at what was said upon that subject in his own memorial, addressed to the Circle of the Upper Rhine, wherein he stated that he was drained of men and money, and that his army was destitute of provisions and other necessaries, and that, from his incapacity to continue the war, they ought to go home. [Mr. Grey read an extract from the memorial.] Was it from the exertion of the Italian States that we expected to derive essential assistance?—Was it from the King of Sardinia?—Was it from Spain, who had already lost a great part of his own dominions, and was in danger of losing the remainder?—Was it from the maritime power of Naples?—or, was it from that disgraceful alliance with the Empress of Russia; who had authorised murder and devastation; who gave us promises in abundance; but who had not yet furnished us for the good common cause, a single man, or a single rubel?—Was it from our good German ally, who had taken twelve hundred thousand pounds of our money?—Let them listen to his construction on the treaty which enabled him to receive that sum of us, as also the opinion of the Emperor on that subject. The Emperor complained that his Prussian Majesty had not brought into the field the sixty-two thousand men agreeably to his engagement. The King of Prussia denied our right to command any of the Prussian troops; and contended that they ought not to march against the French, but ought to remain to defend Germany. [Mr. Grey read the memorials of the Emperor and the King of Prussia on this subject.] He wished to know if any thing

like an excuse could be given by ministers for this wild waste and prodigate lavishment of the money of the people of this country. The Right Hon. Gentleman had quoted a passage from an eloquent speech. He might, by looking a few lines back in the same speech, have found another much more to the purpose :

*Spem si quam adscitis Ætolium habuistis in armis  
Ponite——*

It had been stated by an Hon. Friend of his, that the better way would be to lessen our army, in order to enable us to increase our navy in the present war; that, he admitted, would be proper enough in the conduct of a rational war, but it would be ineffectual for the success and prosecution of this. He believed, indeed, there were very few Gentlemen out of that House, who knew any thing of the resources of France—very few out of that House, who were acquainted with the resources of this country—very few out of that House, who had the slightest knowledge of the real state of our allies, who would give the minister credit for having the power, under any circumstances, of destroying the government of France, or who really believed, that at this hour it was not wise and prudent, on our part, to endeavour to negotiate.

He had often heard that the strongest reason which a great nation could have for entering into a war was to defend its honour; and he agreed with that, because it was by defending its honour it protected itself from insult; but he never understood it to be sound policy to carry this principle beyond all limits; on the contrary, he took this to be, as every thing in human affairs ought to be, subject to the dictates of prudence; and on that account this country had nothing to fear, for we had vindicated our honour sufficiently to secure us from future insult.

The only question for him to consider, and that he confessed was the most difficult, was the general question, How we were to submit to the disgrace of a negotiation? He expected this to be urged to the House, as he had often heard it. His answer was, that his motion did not reach that length. He was ready to confess, that, as far as his opinion went, we ought, under our present circumstances, to begin the negotiation—but his motion did not go to that effect; it was only to put our situation in a negotiable state. —He had heard also a great deal upon the doctrine of the National Convention of France, by which they were said to avow a principle of intermeddling with the governments of other nations; and as a proof of it, the decree of the 19th of November 1792 had been quoted.

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The House ought to recollect that the French Convention had repealed that decree, and followed that repeal with a declaration that they would never interfere with the government of any other country. He had heard it said, that an opportunity of negotiating with the French had not yet offered. He wished to know to what period it would please Gentlemen who asserted this, to allude. Gentlemen on his side of the House had proposed a negotiation at the commencement of the misunderstanding between our government and France. That was a proper period. We had been successful in several instances since the commencement of hostilities. They were proper periods to negotiate, and a negotiation was recommended in each of these instances from that side of the House; had a negotiation been set on foot at that time, he was convinced it would have been effectual. It was not his fault, nor the fault of those with whom he acted, that this country was in so awful a situation as it stood in at present. It was not their fault that so much desolation had taken place; that so many thousands had lost their lives, that the helpless widow had been made to weep, or that the orphan was left destitute of protection; had the advice of his Right Hon. Friend been taken at an early period, all the calamity which Europe had suffered for the last two years might have been avoided. When that happy period should arrive, when the blessings of peace should be restored, it was impossible to foresee. If the Right Hon. Gentleman was determined to persist, as he said he was, till the republican government of France was destroyed, the time but too probably would come first, when he would himself be obliged to humble the tone of his quotations:

*Ante equidem summa de re statuisse—*

*Et vellem, et fuerat melius; non tempore tali*

*Cogere concilium.—*

He was asked, should we trust to the mercy of the French Government? Certainly not: We were a great power, and had great resources; and that was an additional reason why we should put our affairs in a train for negotiation. If we did so now, we could use the full advantage of that power and those resources; should we exhaust them both, and be at last compelled to negotiate, we should then indeed be at the mercy of the French. Should the Right Hon. Gentleman say, after Hanover might possibly be added to the conquests of the French, we might still proceed, perhaps the fertile plains of Lombardy might be added also, and every port from the Pyrenees to Gibraltar, and the whole of Spain—would he then say, that we were less at the mercy of the French than at present?

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Did the Right Hon. Gentleman really believe, that the people in this country would submit for ever to be guided by such abominable policy? Did he really believe, that even at this hour the war was popular? Did any man in that House believe it? he was confident of the contrary. If the House of Commons was really disposed to trust the ministers with the further prosecution of the war, would the Right Hon. Gentleman declare that he could trust his allies? He believed that the minister would not assure the House that he had any such confidence. This, therefore, was surely a time to put our affairs in a train of negotiation, as the Right Hon. Gentleman has been advised by his own friends. Should our attempts in that respect prove fruitless, the House of Commons would then be unanimous, the People would join heart and hand, and we should prosecute the war with vigour; we should then indeed resemble France in the only point for which she was to be envied—the unanimity of the people with their government. For his own part, he declared he should be ready to go to the field, stand in the front of the battle, and fall in the service of his country.

He had within these three days some reason to think that his motion should be altered, because an account had reached this country which ought to have some influence at least, in that House; he meant an account of the debates of the Diet of the Empire, in which all parties agreed, except the Landgrave of Hesse, and the Elector of Hanover, that it is becoming at this time in that Empire, while preparations for the next campaign are continued, to make overtures to the enemy for a decent and equitable peace. But for the notice he had already given of his motion, and of the precise words in which it was to be formed, perhaps the language of the Diet of Ratisbon, or something like that language, would be the most fitting for that House to adopt. Holland, through the ill-judged policy of ministers, had, he said, become a victim to the fury of the enemy, which, had timely caution been exhibited, might have been saved. After then the secession of our allies and the absolute loss of that country, did the Hon. Gentleman wish we should remain alone in the contest, and proceed to our utter ruin?

This was a subject which it would become the House to consider attentively and gravely. He had stated the necessity of taking some measure to avert the further calamities of war. Let Gentlemen of that House, who out of doors were against the war, declare as much within. Let those Members who out of doors scrupled not to say, that they really thought the minister did not intend to prosecute the war, but that he was  
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actually negotiating at this time; let all such not deceive themselves; let them not deceive the minister as to the prosecution of the war, or to the support which he was in reality to have in carrying it on; but let their votes follow the dictates of their hearts. This was not a question whether, as had been stated on a former night, the predictions of one set of men, or the opinions of another, had been justified by events, but a question of magnitude and importance to the country. Mr. Grey concluded with an apt quotation, implying that as ministers had shewn nothing but incapacity on their part, it would not be prudent in that House to repose confidence in their future conduct. He then moved, "That the existence of the present government of France ought not to be considered as precluding, at this time, a negotiation for peace."

*Mr. W. Smith* seconded the motion. He conceived that it was his duty, upon an occasion like this, to deliver his sentiments with honesty and freedom. After what had been urged by the Hon. Gentleman who had just sat down, he had little new to advance. There was a path, however, hitherto untrod-den, through which he would beg leave to lead the Members of the House. It was short, and it would not occupy them long. The reflections which would naturally occur from the observations he was about to make, he was sorry to say, would inspire them with sensations of sorrow, uneasiness, and pain; but by the consequences which might ensue, he hoped they would be succeeded by feelings of a very different nature. The present crisis was a most awful one. His Hon. Friend had declared that it was not the object of his motion to prescribe the necessity, or the mode, of negotiation to his Majesty's ministers. He did not find fault, but he would beg leave to observe, that by delaying proposing terms for peace, the difficulty of obtaining it would increase to an alarming magnitude, till at last they should be compelled by imperious necessity, to which the stiffest necks and the proudest spirits must sometimes bow, to sue for it, perhaps on very dishonourable terms. The train of reflection into which he wished at present to lead their minds, and to which he would entirely confine himself, was the resemblance which subsists between the present contest, and that from which we are scarcely recovered. It was not, he presumed, necessary to say, that he alluded to the American war. The points of resemblance had not struck him till lately; but upon a little consideration, they would be found to be both many in number, and great in degree. He confessed, that arguments from analogy were not always conclusive; but the wisdom which we learn from experience, and which is justly held in so high estimation, when applied to existing circumstances,



cations and the force of the emigrants have, in both cases, been unwisely confided in. It was supposed that the undisciplined Americans could not stand the shock of a disciplined European army; whereas it was found, by woful experience, that the British soldiers gave way in almost every attack, to the furious assault of the undaunted savages of America! Commanders of the first rank and military character, instead of gathering fresh laurels, lost their former glory and reputation. And how have our armies and our ablest Generals fared in France, in Flanders, and in Holland? They have experienced nothing but defeat and disappointment! We had partial successes in the American war, as well as in this, and their effects are the same. One campaign was to put an end to the present war; a second came unexpectedly, but they were assured it could not possibly last to the end of the second. We were, Mr. Smith said, in a situation calamitous and forlorn beyond any precedent, and were called upon to make a vigorous exertion to complete it in the third. Experience had proved, that we had not force sufficient to subjugate America, and he despaired of our ever being able to over-run France, if it was not merely for the purpose of displaying able generalship in the retreat. In short, if the American war had been set up as a warning to ministers against entering into the present war with France, events could not have more exactly corresponded. From the defection of General Arnold, great things were expected, and none were produced: From the revolt of Dumourier, similar expectations were entertained, and similar disappointments experienced. In the course of the French contest also, General Dumourier in the height of victory, and after the most brilliant successes in the cause of freedom, had revolted from the standards of the French; and being Commander in Chief, endeavoured to persuade the whole army he commanded, to join with him in the cause of the allied powers: This the army, all but a very inconsiderable number, flatly refused, and he became a solitary wanderer in consequence of his defection; having ruined his own fame without doing the least service to the allies, whose cause he had espoused. He remembered also that after the victory of Lord Cornwallis at Camden, the then Secretary of State here, wrote to his Lordship "that the ministry doubted not but that all America, south of the Delaware, would submit to his Lordship's arms before the end of that campaign." In the same manner, after the taking of Condé and Valenciennes by the allied powers, some Gentlemen in that House immediately conceived, that the next progressive step would be to march to Paris. Yet both these had turned out the reverse; for instead of the Americans

icans submitting to Lord Cornwallis, they had obliged him and his whole army to surrender themselves prisoners of war; and in lieu of the allied armies marching to Paris, after the capture of Valenciennes, they had been driven first out of France, next out of Belgium, and lastly out of Holland.

America, when at war with us, was supported by France, and afterwards by Spain and Holland. As yet France had received no accession of strength, but that of Great Britain was considerably diminished by the defection of her allies. Similar endeavours were used in America to what have been made in France, for compressing the sentiments of the people into one channel. In America, and upon the Continent, the same complaints have been made of the rapacity of the army, a rapacity of which, in the present instance, he did not accuse the English soldiers, at least for which he did not blame them, as any excesses of which they have been guilty, have been the consequence of disappointments, the want of supplies, and bad treatment. In both wars we have had occasion to subsidize foreign powers. In the last war, we expended 1,500,000*l.* for the sake of 18,000 men; but the time was certainly past, when such a subsidy can be said to have been extravagant. They have both been conducted with the same spirit, and the same arguments had been used for the purpose of deluding the people of this country with regard to the resources, first of America, and then of France. Congress paper dollars, and French assignats, were at such a tremendous discount and depreciation in value, that it would be impossible for them to carry on the war much longer. This for a length of time succeeded in blinding the people, but the fatal bubble at length appeared too plain to be any longer believed. With respect to the resources of the French, it was rather extraordinary to hear the minister boast of their being so nearly exhausted, when it appeared by a very recent report made to the Convention, that they consisted of a sum amounting to 600,000,000*l.* sterling. Mr. Smith said, he could not wonder at the same artifices being used now, and the same arguments resorted to, which had been during the American war, when he looked on the Gentlemen who at the present moment composed the ministry. Many of them were leading or subordinate Members of the then Administration; and when he cast his eye on the Right Hon. Gentleman opposite to him, and saw him surrounded by the motley group, it convinced him that there was one thing in which he had not failed to copy his Noble Father, and that was in the formation of a ministry. In the Administration of that time, there was a most heterogeneous mixture of men of different sentiments and parties; or,

in the words of Mr. Burke, it was an Administration unsafe to touch, and unsure to stand upon. Whether the present Administration merited that character, time would shew ;—but, for one, he would be bold to assert, it would be unsafe to trust it with the interests of the state. Both Administrations had distinguished themselves by a total disregard to predictions, and the predictions uttered by the opponents of each have been justified by the subsequent facts. The objects of both wars have been continually varying and undefined. The American war was sometimes termed a war of necessity, at other times of rebellion, and at other times of supremacy.—The objects of the present war have been almost as various as the catastrophes with which it has been attended ; and of late, they had found out, that it was unconditional submission on the part of French that they were contending for. The opposers of the American war were accused of being enemies to property, and the order of society ; the opposers of the present war were branded with similar characters. The event of the American war is well known ; from a war arising from similar causes, conducted on similar principles, and marking its course with similar disasters, we might expect a similar issue. Conclusions, he knew, of a different nature, would be drawn by some Gentlemen ; but when the parallel was impartially considered, he knew of one only which the circumstances of the case would justify. He trusted that the House of Commons would no longer remain blind to it, and that they would act in a manner suitable to the serious impression which it was calculated to make, and could scarcely fail to produce.

*Mr. Adams and The Chancellor of the Exchequer* rose at the same time. Mr. Adams had caught the Speaker's eye, and proceeded. He said, that he differed with the Right Hon. Gentleman who made the motion. He did not think this was a proper time to enter into a negotiation ; if the proposal of peace were even to come at this moment from the French to us, he should much doubt whether it would not be detrimental to our interests to accept it. He declared he had the greatest confidence in the exertions of our navy, which he doubted not would always prove the safeguard of this nation. He thought the Hon. Gentleman who made the motion had forgotten a part of the Address of the House to his Majesty, which he desired to be read.

[The passage of the Address alluded to was read.]

Mr. Adams then said, he thought that Address was, and ought to be considered as a direct negative upon the purport of the present motion.

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*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* stated, that he arose at this period of the debate, as he was extremely desirous of taking the earliest opportunity to deliver his sentiments on the present important question. Before, however, he stated the grounds of his objection to the resolution moved by the Hon. Gentleman, and before he proposed the Amendment, which he meant to submit to the House, he was anxious that they might be fully in possession, both of the repeated declarations of his Majesty, and the sentiments that had been expressed by Parliament on former occasions. For this purpose, he desired the Clerk to read a passage from his Majesty's Speech on the 21st of January 1794, and the answer of the House; and likewise part of the declaration of the 29th of October 1793, and the declaration of the 20th of November 1793, at Toulon.

These being read by the Clerk, *the Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, he should take the liberty, in the course of what he had to offer to the House, to contend, that there was nothing at present in the situation of the country, or of Europe, which ought to induce the House to depart from the sentiments recorded in those declarations; from the sentiments expressed from the Throne, and from those sentiments which had received the approbation of Parliament. He should contend that the motion that had been made was directly inconsistent with those principles, and he should farther contend, that, whatever there was in the present situation of the country, it called on the House, instead of acceding to the Hon. Gentleman's motion, to shew to our enemies and to the world, that we did not shrink from those sober and rational principles which we had uniformly maintained. With that view, he thought it right in the outset to mention the precise nature and terms of the Amendment he meant to propose, which was as follows :

“ That under the present circumstances, this House feels itself called upon to declare its determination firmly and steadily to support his Majesty in the vigorous prosecution of the present just and necessary war, as affording, at this time, the only reasonable expectation of permanent security and peace to this country : And that, for the attainment of these objects, this House relies with equal confidence on his Majesty's intention to employ vigorously the force and resources of the country, in support of its essential interests; and on the desire uniformly manifested by his Majesty, to effect a pacification on just and honourable grounds with any government in *France*, under whatever form, which shall appear capable of maintaining the accustomed relations of peace and amity with other countries.”

He begged to refer the House to the authentic declarations of Parliament and of the Crown on this subject, from which it clearly appeared, that his Majesty from the Throne had avowed sentiments which they themselves had also stated in speeches in that House, and which he believed, to a greater or less extent, had been adopted by every man in that House and in the country, namely, that it would be a desirable issue of the present state of things, to see the re-establishment of some government in the form of a monarchy in France. His Majesty had declared his desire to co-operate with those who were willing to effect that re-establishment. That nothing was more justifiable, and, under the present circumstances, would be more political, than to direct the efforts of this country to avail itself of any opening in that country, if any there was, to facilitate the re-establishment of some monarchical government, was plain, obvious, and explicit: On the other hand, it was equally clear, that his Majesty's sentiments and the language of Parliament were not to be tried by doubtful constructions or plausible misrepresentations, but by the most solemn written documents.

In fact, the restoration of monarchy, upon the old principles, had never been stated by his Majesty, by Government, or by Parliament, as a *sine qua non*, as preparatory to peace. Not only so, but it had never been stated that any one specific and particular form of government was deemed on our part necessary before we could negotiate for peace. It had been stated, that his Majesty had no desire to interfere in the internal affairs of France; and as long as that country had abstained from interfering with the government of other nations, till a direct and absolute aggression had been made on this country, and till hostilities had been actually commenced, his Majesty adhered strictly to that declaration, and abstained from any such interference: When that interference took place, which was agreeable to every experience and practice of the world, and justifiable on every plain principle of the law of nations, his Majesty still restrained himself to that degree of interference which was necessary for his own security and that of Europe; and that the only description he gave of the species of government which he was desirous of seeing established, was not that which he thought most eligible; it was not that which he thought most free from objection, one form of government and another compared; but any government which was sufficient for the purposes of other nations. When his Majesty felt himself under the necessity of looking at the government of France, he looked at it certainly not without  
a wish

a wish which must naturally arise in every generous heart, that it might be adapted for the prosperity and happiness of those who were to live under it. But with a view to negotiation and to peace, his Majesty did not look at it with that view, or for that purpose. He could only look at it for English views and for English purposes, to see whether it held out the solid grounds of treating with any degree of reasonable security, for the performance of engagements that usually subsisted, and was to be found in the existing system of the different Powers of Europe, without being liable to that new and unexampled order of things, that state of anarchy and confusion, which had for years existed in France. That having been the true measure and extent of the declarations made by his Majesty and by Parliament, he conceived that no man in that House, on looking back to them, would wish he had not made those declarations; that no man would feel they were not made on just principles, or that they did not arise from a fair view of the circumstances and necessity of the case. He had endeavoured to state his amendment almost in the very form of his Majesty's declarations. The Hon. Gentlemen on the other side of the House, were of opinion, that in no case the form of government in another country ought to be considered as having any influence on the security of a treaty, but that we ought only to look to the terms and conditions of the treaty, without regarding the power, the authority, the character, the nature and circumstances of the government that made it, or the state of that government. To that doctrine, however, he could never assent. He must contend, that every nation at war with another, ought not to treat for peace with a government that could not give security. He was not ready, therefore, to treat with the present government of France; nor with any government, under any circumstances, or at any time, but with such a government as should appear capable of maintaining the accustomed forms of peace and amity with other nations.

That the situation of France, since the commencement of the present war, had been such, that there did not exist in that country a government capable of maintaining with other nations the accustomed relations he had stated—that it was in a situation in which no security that could be given to a peace, made it preferable to the continuing of a difficult and hazardous war—was a proposition which was necessary for him to maintain. It was a proposition that had been maintained again and again in that House, and by some of the Gentlemen who now seemed to think that treaty ought to be attempted. He conceived, as it appeared on the face of the argument of that day,

day, that the Hon. Mover and others could not expect any considerable part of the House to agree with them, either in their principles or their conclusions. They set out with observing, that the war was not a war originating in aggression on the part of France, and that we had not that proof of the hostile intentions of France towards this country, which would demonstrate that the war was just and necessary in its origin. It had, as he had just observed that day, been denied that the war commenced by aggression on the part of France; but that in fact it had originated with this country. To such an assertion neither he, nor those who had acted with him, could accede, without sacrificing every principle upon which they had hitherto called for and received the zealous and uniform support of the country. But that was not all. The Hon. Mover, and those who supported him, must contend, that throughout the whole of the French Revolution, from the very commencement of it, during the reign of the two tyrants Brissot and Robespierre, as well as under the present system of Moderantism, there was no one period in what was falsely termed the Republican Government, even in the most bloody part of the reign of Robespierre, there was no one pause of anarchy and confusion, even when that government was supported by terror, and declared to be supported by enthusiasm, at the moment when the system of terror was working its own destruction; there was no one period in which the Government of France did not possess sufficient stability or authority founded on a permanent basis, in which it did not possess a sufficient community of interest with the people, a sufficient interest in the hearts of the people, a sufficient guard for its own engagements, sufficient power, sufficient moderation of sentiment, to afford this country a rational prospect of security.

From the beginning of the war to that moment, supposing the terms of peace could be settled, we were not, according to the Hon. Mover, and those who agreed with him, to consider our security as affected by the internal situation of France. The House had not said so: The House had said directly the reverse; and he hoped the House would say the same thing again. Every man in the House and in the country must be satisfied that, in the termination of every war, there were two objects, reparation and security, but the great object was security. Reparation was only an auxiliary, only a subordinate object. Would any man tell him that a nation like France, put into a situation perfectly new, into a situation directly the reverse of all the existing governments on earth, destroying the foundations and the bonds of all political society,

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breaking down the distinction of all ranks, and subverting the security of property; a government pretending to put a whole nation into a situation of pretended equality; not the equality of laws, but an actual equality, an equality contrary to the physical inequality of men. Would any man tell him, that we ought to make peace with a government constructed upon such principles, which had attempted, by every means in its power, to molest its neighbours, to impoverish and distress itself; to propagate its pernicious principles, to make converts, and to hold out the means of seducing other nations; and that had followed that up by open and direct acts of aggression, by a positive violation of treaties, and lastly, by an open declaration of war? This country scrupulously and religiously observed a neutrality, while it could hope or have a reasonable prospect, that the mischiefs of the French revolution would be confined within their own territories. We remained passive spectators of the conduct of France, until the very moment that we against our will were forced into the contest. And would any man say that it was rational, under any circumstances, to attempt to negotiate a peace without taking into consideration the idea of security, the attainment of which, as already observed, was the great and primary object of every war? The whole question was narrowed to a single and a plain point—war being at all times one of the greatest of human evils, and never to be tolerated on any other grounds than that the evils of war were less painful upon the whole, than the dangers attending an insecure and dishonourable peace. The whole question from time to time since the commencement of hostilities, resolved itself into a comparison of these two evils. They must not impiously imagine they could explore the secrets of Providence, and define the precise point to which the fortune of war might compel them; that would be to arrogate more than belongs to human wisdom, and, like other presumptions, must terminate in error and disappointment. They must proceed on general principles, which he could fairly describe. For the application arising from the circumstances, he must refer to the wisdom of Parliament. The general principle he had stated was, that they ought not to regard the particular form of the government, but to look to the whole, to all the circumstances, whether it was or was not a government that could give them a reasonable degree of security.

The immediate question between the Hon. Mover and him was, whether the present circumstances of the internal state and government of France did or did not afford a prospect of sufficient security for a peace, so as to make it wise on the



part of this country to negotiate it? That was a question of infinite importance. It was, whether the government of France was such, at that moment, as to hold out that degree of reasonable security from any treaty of peace which might be concluded, as to make it, under all the present circumstances, preferable to the vigorous prosecution of the war? What did they naturally look to in the state of any country, but to the manner in which they performed their engagements? They looked to their stability—to their apparent authority—and to the reliance they could place in their pacific dispositions. He would not dwell on these circumstances. Let them recollect what had been generated under that system, and those principles that were now prevalent in France. They had seen them producing and exhibiting hitherto, not a government, but a succession and series of revolutions, for that was the proper situation in which France had stood since the commencement of the present war. The terror of this revolution had been suspended a little more than six months. They had seen the reign and fall of Brissot; they had seen the reign and fall of Robespierre; and they now saw the prevalence of a system that was called moderantism. They had to recollect that Gentlemen on the other side of the House held out to them the same sort of arguments for entering into a treaty with France almost on the extinction of these two tyrants. Arguments were then produced of the stability of the government; and they now saw what was the ground of security, and how much they ought to depend on such arguments. But he did not wish to rest the question solely on the ground of so many successive changes: But, whether the manner in which they had cried up the sovereignty of the people, whether the manner in which the pride and passions of the populace had been erected into the criterion and rule of government, afforded any rational ground of security to any peace that could possibly be made. If that was not so, what were the particular grounds of permanence now existing in France, that ought to give us dependence on its stability more than formerly, in the time of Brissot and Robespierre? The mere question of moderantism would not be sufficient for that purpose. Though there was some relaxation of the severity and terror of former times, that would not be sufficient. It was a moderation which arose only from comparison. The system of revolutionary tribunals was not varied. That great leading article on which the happiness of the people so materially depended was not essentially varied, whatever it might be in mode or degree. He said he would not tire the House on that subject, but examine what were the leading points to which

which they ought to turn their attention. Some of them had been enumerated by a Noble Friend of his (Lord Mornington) at the beginning of last session, with a force of language and of argument, which had made too strong an impression upon the minds of those who heard him to be readily forgotten. He had then most clearly shewed the influence of public opinion, as unfavourable to the permanence of the government, and paving the way for its destruction. He said he mentioned this for the purpose of shewing, that when the power of Robespierre was at its height, it was understood by the other side of the House as a powerful argument of the great stability of the government. That tyrant possessed the greatest degree of power and terror that ever existed; whereas the present rulers of France being disarmed of that force, had only the chance of being supported by the opinion of the people. Look at the manner in which the revenue was at present collected in France. Did the present government recommend itself by the greater moderation of the means it used? Within a little more than a year and a half, the confiscations that took place in that devoted country, and which were the resources of the present government, exceeded THREE HUNDRED MILLIONS STERLING. That was the amount of the confiscations from May 1793 to the month of May last. And these confiscations were founded on what?—Upon that which would be looked upon by a British House of Commons, and by this country in general, with horror. That immense sum did not arise from seizing the fortunes of exiled Nobles and Emigrants, but from confiscations made long after. They had seized as forfeitures the property of all persons who remained in the country, but who were possessed of landed estates, and had shewn the smallest dislike to the revolution. Having exiled the whole nobility and great landed proprietors in the course of a year and an half, they had, after that, collected that great sum. Whether the charge of guilt, upon which that confiscation had been grounded, had been falsely or truly applied, it equally made for his argument. In one view, it furnished the strongest proof of oppression in consequence of the system of terror, and if it was considered in another view, it was an incontestible proof of the division of the sentiments of the people of France, which contradicted the observations of the Hon. Mover, who talked in such strong terms of that united people, and yet three hundred millions sterling were taken from those persons who did not admire the principles of the revolution. Taken in the other view, it might be considered as the fruits of the bloody massacres that took place under the

dominion of Robespierre. It would appear then, what weight was due to the assertion, that all the French were united in one cause, when the great resources by which they had been able to carry on the war, had been derived almost entirely from the fund of confiscation and proscription, and had been the fruits and harvest of the bloody massacres which had marked the different periods of their revolution, and consisted of that system, on their professed detestation of which they built their power, and by the destruction of which alone, they attempted to support it, and acquire the confidence, affection, and good-will of the country. If these had hitherto formed its principal resources, in renouncing the system of Robespierre, the present government had crippled their power of action, and deprived themselves of the means of exertion.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer next called the attention of the House to the state of the agriculture and commerce of France. He said he wished to describe the present state of the agriculture and commerce of that country, not from any reports which the Hon. Mover might suppose had come to his hands from those who were friendly to him: His reporters were certainly not persons immediately dependent on him, or those who had any good-will towards him. They were the Members of the National Convention of France, who made reports to that assembly from the several Committees. According to those reports, their agriculture was *extinguished*; their commerce *annihilated*. That was the situation in which France stood. They had declared they were willing to reanimate commerce; but the present actual situation of the country was such as he had described. See whether, in fact, they had afforded any relief to commerce, and to the agriculture of the country, and whether they had any just title to the love and affection of the bulk of the people.

He next adverted to the state of justice in the country. All sanguinary cruelties had been committed through the medium of revolutionary tribunals; and though they were less cruel under the present government, they were only so by comparison with the former system, properly denominated the system of terror.

He desired the House to look at the state of religion in France, and asked them if they would willingly treat with a nation of atheists. He did not wish to consider them in that point of view. God forbid that we should look on the body of the people of France as atheists, whatever might be the case with some individuals. It was not possible that a whole nation, in so short a time, should have renounced the religion of

of their fathers, forgotten all the principles in which they had been educated, extinguished the feelings of nature, and subdued the workings of conscience. To the larger proportion of the mass, there could not be an heavier burden than to be deprived of the exercise of that religion, and to be deprived of it in a country that called itself a land of liberty, and which set out on the principles of toleration, in a country which supposed itself to enjoy more than human liberty : And yet, under the present moderate government, he believed a proposition had been made, to solemnize the Christian religion ; when the Convention passed to the order of the day, proposing forthwith to establish a plan of decadal Pagan festivals, and accompanied by a declaration, that all the priests should be detained in prison till that new religion was established. Although the present Convention of France profess to have renounced the crimes and cruelties of their predecessors, yet, since they had been in a state of pure innocence, had there been more apparent unanimity among those in whom the present government subsisted ? On the contrary, there never had been stronger instances of opposition, distraction, and confusion. They were continually recriminating on each other the guilt of those very cruelties he had been stating. Did he say then that the present system of government in France must necessarily fall ? He said no such thing. Did he then say that the present rulers of France might not extricate themselves in some degree from that abuse, and follow a more just and prudent line ; and that they might not gradually draw a veil over former severities, by which, if they could not gain the good opinion and confidence of others, they might at least obtain their acquiescence ? They certainly might. Had that time arrived ? Undoubtedly it had not. But if such a change should take place, and such an order of things should arrive, through whatever road, and by whatever means, if they gave to their government that stability and that authority which might afford grounds, not of certainty, but of moral probability, by which human affairs must be conducted, that we might treat for peace with security, then would be the proper time to negotiate ; but we ought in prudence to wait the return of such circumstances as would afford us a probability of treating with success. So much on that part of the subject.

Supposing, however, that he did not look to the chance of a change, the next thing was, what assurance had we of the pacific disposition of the present National Convention of France toward this country ? We had reasons founded on probability, to infer that they entertained a spirit of hostility

to all regular governments; and most of all to the government of Great Britain. If they had any reason to believe that the Convention of France were disposed to peace, must he not infer that they were disposed to it, because they thought it would most probably tend to their advantage, and to our ruin? Till there was satisfactory evidence that their spirit of hostility to other nations was destroyed, he saw probable ground, in the very nature of their system, that they must persevere in that hostility, till they ceased to act upon it. They looked upon their own government as the only lawful government in the world, and regarded the governments of all other nations as usurpation. Such was the ground on which they had undertaken the war. Did France make any professions of peace, or did she shew any dispositions for peace, but as she felt herself wearied of the war, and as she found herself involved in difficulties? The National Convention had said plainly they desired a partial peace, because so extensive a war they found themselves unequal to prosecute. They had professed they desired peace with some of the powers, in order to ruin more securely those against whom they wished still to carry on the war; and he might add, afterwards to ruin those with whom now they professed to be willing to treat for peace. They would make a distinction in making peace. Their moderation was reserved for Holland, their vindictive principles for Great Britain. Could such dispositions either give security to peace, or render it of long continuance?

It had been stated, that the decree of the 19th of November had been repealed, and that therefore the French no longer aspired at interfering with the internal government of other countries. In April 1793 they had enacted something on the subject of peace. They enacted that the penalty of death should be inflicted on any person who should propose peace with any country, unless that country acknowledged the French republic, one and indivisible, founded on the principles of liberty and equality. They were not merely satisfied with a partial acknowledgment *de facto*; they required an acknowledgment *de jure*. He wished to know if these principles were once recognized as the legitimate foundation of government, whether they would not be universal in their application. Could these principles be excluded from other nations? And if they could not, would they not amount to a confession of the usurpation and injustice of every other government? If they were to treat for peace with France, they knew one of the things that must be preparatory to it, and that was, that they would acknowledge what they had hitherto denied.

denied. They must acknowledge those principles which condemned the usurpation of all the other governments, and denied the very power they were exercising. Such was the preliminary that must precede a proposal to treat, and what next would happen if peace was obtained? (leaving out all consideration of the terms of it which might be expected to be high in proportion to their acquisition of territory.) Did they look at the situation in which they would lay open this country to all the emissaries of France? In proportion to the success of France, those principles had grown more bold in this, and in every other country. They had increased in activity and means of resistance. Were they to give up those safeguards which had been lately thrown round the constitution; and were they to follow the advice of the other side of the House by having recourse to the universal loyalty of the people of England? Did Gentlemen think that we ran no risk of serious internal dangers by reviving and rekindling the embers of that faction in this country, which the other side of the House had supposed were now totally extinguished? Peace obtained under such circumstances, could not be stated with confidence as to its permanence, and therefore, if it were to be obtained, we must remain in a state of vigilant jealousy and never-ceasing suspicion. In that state, what sort of peace could we enjoy?—Could such a state possibly be preferable to war?—Would they not then give up those advantages they enjoyed? Were the country to disarm, few, he supposed, would be inclined to approve of that alternative; on the other hand, they could not remain armed without giving up in a certain degree, that pitch of force, to which they had brought the exertions of the country, and retaining an establishment burthen some to peace, and ineffectual to war. It was impossible for any human being, in the present circumstances, to suppose a state of settled peace; it must be a state of watching each other, of inquietude, of distrust, merely a short truce, a state of partial inactivity and interrupted repose. In such a peace there could be no security; it was exposed to so much hazard, doubt, and danger, that no man could possibly look to it, except the exhausted state of our resources was such as to exclude the possibility of further exertion. The question was not the option between peace and war, but the option of war under considerable difficulties, with great means and resources, or peace without security.

He said he should be ashamed to go over the means of our resources; but as that object had been touched on by the Hon. Gentleman who had introduced the question, he must say

say a few words on the relative situation of the two countries. The foundation of the argument of the Hon. Mover was, that the resources of France were of so extraordinary a nature, that they were such as the other nations of Europe could not bear, but France, having borne them for so many years, could do that which other nations could not do—and that they were therefore bound to suppose that the resources of France were superior to those of this country, which had expended so many millions without having had any effect on the revenue, commerce, and manufactures of the country, without means that were equal to the pressure sustained in other wars where this country had carried them on successfully. The Hon. Gentleman, who swept off millions from the expenditure of France, had added them with as rude a hand to the account of this country; he had said, if we were to make peace at that moment, the expence would be seventy millions sterling, and the extra expences would be calculated moderately at fifty millions sterling. How much the Hon. Gentleman allowed for winding up expences he knew not, but they were certainly large. Without taking in the expences of the present year, of 220,000 men, including the regular army and militia, and the vote of 100,000 seamen, to the best of his recollection, taking the expences of the year 1793 and of 1794, up to the end of last December, the sum was about twenty-five millions sterling, and there was a capital to be created, of somewhat more than thirty millions. This point was not very closely connected with the question, but he had corrected the statement of the Hon. Gentleman, who wished to shew we were no longer able to carry on the war, though he could not prove the least defalcation in the revenue of the country, or a diminution of the public credit. To what was that sum to be opposed on the part of France? To 260 millions sterling, which that country had expended during the last two years. Would any man say that France could afford to spend 260 millions sterling, of which the inhabitants had been plundered, better than Great Britain? That immense sum had been collected in France by force and terror, and had been attended by effects admitted by themselves to produce the desolation of the interior of the country, the extinction of agriculture, the ruin of their resources, the subversion of all the means of profitable industry, and the annihilation of every branch of commerce, besides the collateral circumstance of the system of assignats which he had mentioned on a former day. He said, on a former day he had made the expences of the French republic amount to 480 millions sterling, which the Hon. Gentleman who had

made the motion said was exaggerated by 120 millions. But the Hon. Gentleman had begun his calculations two years later than he, which was the reason of that difference. The assignats, which were formerly near par, were now about 85 per cent. below it. That the House might not mistake him, they were not worth 85l. per cent. but only 15l. per cent. And therefore he repeated his former assertion; that there was a rapid and a progressive decay in the internal resources of France. It had been stated, that he had year after year represented the resources of France to be in a rapid state of decline. The first year of the war cost France 160 millions, which produced a rapid and progressive decay in the state of their finances; and was there any thing ridiculous in supposing those resources to be still in a progressive state of decay, after they had expended, during the last campaign, another 160 millions sterling?

The Hon. Gentleman who seconded the motion (Mr. Smith), in the longest simile he had ever heard, observed, that the resources of America were declining for three years together. But would any man say that the features of that war bore any resemblance to those of the present, which marked the calamities of France? It had been observed, that the French were making great exertions, and that therefore it was unjust to say their resources were at all decayed. But the question was, whether those great exertions ought not to be considered as a proof of the decay of the resources of the country? Would any man tell him that the internal state of the country would not be affected by a continued and extraordinary supply of the nerves and sinews of war? The Hon. Gentleman who made the motion, had stated that the French had extended their conquests from Gibraltar to the Baltic. But no brilliant success, no acquisition of territory, was sufficient to compensate this internal decay of resources. The wide difference in point of resources, was as important to the fate of empires and the lot of kingdoms as new conquest. And the balance there was as much in our favour as the acquisition of territory was against other countries and in favour of France; and if there was no safety to be obtained by making peace, he was not urging an argument unbecoming the House of Commons.

There were many other points on which he wished to touch; but would not discuss them at length. One or two observations he could not help stating. It had been asked, what force had we to oppose to that of France? He answered, an increased force on the part of this country. The Convention had said that their forces must be contracted: Their efforts must therefore be exhausted. Besides the exertions by sea and



land which had been made by this country, it would probably depend on the resolution and firmness of that House, whether the Emperor might not be enabled to bring such a military force into the field, as would render an extent of exertion necessary on the part of France, of which they had declared themselves incapable. It was said, do you expect to conquer France? Do you expect a counter-revolution? when do you intend to march to Paris? If such was at one time our success in France, that the Convention were put in imminent fear of the combined armies penetrating to Paris, it was not very extraordinary that his Hon. Friend at London (Mr. Jenkinson) should allow himself to entertain a degree of hope of the possibility of that event. By a mode of arguing, not unusual with Gentlemen on the other side, whose practice it frequently was first to state positions in order that they afterwards may combat them, ministers had been charged with looking to the conquest of France. They had never held out any such object; they had only professed their hope of making such an impression upon the interior of that country as might lead to a secure and stable peace; and of being able, by the assistance of those well-disposed persons who were enemies to the present system, to establish a government honourable to them and safe to ourselves. If a change had taken place in the government of France, which rendered it more expedient for us to treat in the present than at a former period, he would ask if nothing had been gained? We were now in a situation less remote from that in which we might be able to treat with security. It had been urged that we ought to have let France alone. What was the consequence of neutrality but to produce aggression? But now that war had been two years carried on, the detestable system of their government had subsided into a state of less flagrant atrocity. It had been said that all France, to a man, was united for a republic. What was meant by the phrase of a republic? Was it merely a name at the top of a sheet of paper? Was their desire of a republic to be gathered from their submission to the tyranny of Robespierre? Was their unanimity to be inferred from the numerous proscriptions and massacres of federalists and royalists?

The Chancellor of the Exchequer proceeded to recapitulate the general grounds on which he had opposed the original resolution, and the motives from which he had been induced to bring forward the amendment, which he had read, and should conclude with moving. Peace! Peace was not obstructed by any form of government; but by a consideration of the internal circumstances of France. He remarked that there had been great misconstructions and misconceptions with respect

to what he had stated on former occasions to be his sentiments, as to the re-establishment of monarchy, which he by no means wished to be considered as a *sine qua non* to the attainment of peace, and therefore he had not contented himself with barely negating the resolution, but had been induced in the amendment to substitute that language which, in his mind, it became Parliament to hold, as best adapted to the subject. There was one other consideration to which he should advert, namely, the remark that the attempt to treat, though not likely to be successful, would yet be attended with advantage, both in France and this country. In France it would shew that we were disposed to treat. If it were wise to treat, this certainly would be an advantage; but such a conduct, instead of forwarding peace, would only be productive of danger, it would lead to a proposition of terms from France, elated by its recent acquisitions, which it would be impossible for this country to accept. And he trusted that his Hon. Friend (Mr. Wilberforce), who had, he conceived, gone too far in his propositions with respect to peace on a former occasion, would be convinced, upon his own principles, that as the difficulty increased, any proposition to treat in the present moment would have the effect to encourage the enemy, and to bury the remains of opposition in France. In this country it would have the effect to sink the spirit of the people, and to tell them that it was right to look for peace, though it was impossible to look for security; it would be to insinuate a doubt of their zeal, energy, and courage, and to add to the depression already produced by a succession of misfortunes and a series of misrepresentations. The Hon. Gentleman had said, that if his proposition to treat should not in the event be successful, he would then support the war. Upon what ground could he support a war which he had in the first instance conceived and declared, and stood in the front of the battle, to be neither necessary nor just? But till the period should arrive at which it would be possible to treat with a rational prospect of security, and a degree of, at least, probable advantage, he, and those who thought with him, must continue to support a war, of the justice and necessity of which they were firmly persuaded, and which they could not, in the present moment, abandon without a sacrifice of their opinion, their consistency, and their honour.

*Sir William Young* seconded the amendment, which he applauded as affording an opportunity of getting rid of a proposition that he could neither approve nor would have chosen to negative. He followed the same train of argument as the Chancellor of the Exchequer had pursued. The French armies, he said, had been hitherto collected by terror, and, as they

had now disarmed themselves of that weapon, they could not collect such armies in future. He declared, he was always for a declaration such as the amendment contained; and lamented that a declaration of that kind had not been made sooner. There could be no analogy between the American war, a war with our own subjects, and the present war. The French, who went to assist the Americans, had brought back with them all the principles of the anarchy which they afterwards introduced into their own country. The war, he admitted, had been calamitous; but we must not, he contended, on that account, think of sacrificing our honour.

*Mr. T. W. Coke (of Norfolk)* declared himself an advocate for peace, let the proposition come from whom, or in what shape it might. Every man in this country he believed to be so, except the immediate connexions and dependents of ministers, contractors, and jobbers, who profited by the war. For the difficulty of obtaining it they had only the minister's assertion, which the House ought not to take for proof. The people had been deluded into an approbation of the war in the first instance, but had at length seen their error. Indeed he believed those who wished it to be persisted in were very few in any part of the kingdom. The minister, he hoped, did not take his information that the war was popular from a Right Hon. Gentleman near him (*Mr. Windham*). If he did, that Gentleman would soon be able to inform him, that the people of Norwich were against the war. Indeed, all the people in the county of Norfolk felt the danger to which the coast was exposed by the French getting possession of Holland, and wished for peace. The experiment of trying to obtain it could do no harm, and might do much good. If it should fail, the consequence would be uniting the heart and hand of every Englishman for a vigorous prosecution of the war. Any proposition tending to accelerate peace, should have his support, without regard to personal attachments. How great his attachment was to a Right Hon. Gentleman (*Mr. Fox*), whose counsels, if followed, would have saved the country from the loss and disgrace in which it had been involved, he had no need to state upon this occasion. Of that great and illustrious statesman, the manly mind and unrivalled talents were known to the House, and to the Public, and rendered still more conspicuous by his disinterested conduct, in times of general corruption. The day, *Mr. Coke* said, he was persuaded, was not far distant, when he would be called upon by the public voice, to save the nation from the calamities which the misconduct of others threatened to bring upon it.

*Mr.*

*Mr. Yorke* said, that the opinion he had formed of the justice and necessity of this war had not been at all altered, but was rather strengthened and confirmed by the declamation of the Hon. Gentleman who made the motion. Indeed every hour of the continuance of the war convinced him of the strong necessity of giving the ministers every possible support, as the only rational means of obtaining an honourable, a secure, or a permanent peace. He had listened to the Hon. Mover of the question, in the expectation of hearing something like argument to convince the House that benefit would be derived to this country by making this proposal of peace, or at least to prove that it would not be productive of injury. He had listened with attention, but he had listened without effect. The situation in which this country was at this moment, appeared to him, of all others, the most unfavourable for negotiating an honourable peace, for the enemy would of course now demand terms such as it would be entirely incompatible with the dignity and with the interest of this country to accede to. But when he admitted that the affairs of this country were at present in an unfavourable state, he by no means meant to state that they were reduced to that situation in which they ought to propose or to accede to a disgraceful peace. But in such a crisis if a peace could be obtained from the French, and it were even a good one, what hopes could we have that it would be permanent? The French republic, if established, would probably be a military republic, and was therefore to be resisted by all possible means in its infancy. The conquest of Holland exposed us to great danger; but he held ministers to be responsible for protecting our coal and coasting trade. He placed great confidence in our own resources compared with those of France, and contended that the disasters of the war, either by sea or land, were nothing to what we had experienced in former wars, without abandoning our hopes, or remitting our exertions.

*Mr. Powys* said, that all the arguments had been so entirely exhausted by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that he rose not to attempt repeating any of them, but to declare his opinion more explicitly than by a silent vote. They who had taken an active part in supporting the war at its commencement, ought not in such a crisis to shrink from their former opinions, because the success had not been equal to their hopes. He complimented *Mr. Grey* on the extraordinary candour with which he had brought forward his motion; but said he was so dull as not to comprehend the definite meaning of the words, or the consequences expected from it, if it were to be adopted. The House had used no term so strong as that the exist-

existence of the present government of France, if the same of government was not disgraced by being so applied, ought to preclude a negotiation. Its existence was certainly an obstacle to negotiation, although an obstacle, in his opinion, insurmountable at present. Gentlemen who talked of proposing peace, ought to state what terms of peace, if rejected by France, would unite every hand and heart in this country. He admitted that there was no near prospect of success; but that had always been the opinion of those who opposed the war, and wanted this country to join hands in amity with hands embued in the blood of their Sovereign. The Dutch had attempted to negotiate for peace, and while they were attempting it their country had been over-run. He should be sorry to apply harsh terms to an unfortunate ally, but the loss of Holland, he feared, was to be imputed to a mean and mercenary spirit of calculation. He insisted that the war was a contest for our existence as a nation, and that were our resources to fail, we must still continue it, although we should be able to do nothing but shew our teeth.

*Mr. Wilberforce* said, he still retained the opinion which he had the honour of stating on the first day of the session. Every hour's reflection, every day's experience, confirmed him more and more in that opinion. The question before the House was important, and he felt the importance of it in a higher degree in consequence of the part he had already taken. He concurred entirely in the spirit of the original motion; but he saw that it must be liable to the treatment it had received, and therefore he wished it had been worded in such a manner as to render a direct decision upon it unavoidable. In his opinion it would have been better to say, and he would try to do it still, if he knew by what means, "that no particular form of government in France ought to preclude such a peace, when that could be obtained, as would be otherwise honourable and safe." On one point, however, they seemed to be all agreed, *viz.* on the propriety of declaring that a republican form of government in France ought not to be an insurmountable bar in the way of peace. The question was, "Were the words of the amendment sufficiently explicit?" He thought they were not. His opinion always had been, that with a republican government established at Paris, we could not have such security for the continuance of peace as with the old government of France, or indeed a monarchy of almost any description. This was an evil; but, on the other hand, he must consider the certain evils of war, and the possible evil of being obliged at last to make peace under circumstances more unfavourable than the present. The amendment proposed relying

ing on the disposition which his Majesty had always manifested. If his Majesty had always manifested such a disposition, the prejudices entertained both in France and in this country, for such there assuredly were, could never be cured by a repetition of the prejudices which had been originally entertained. Neither had his Majesty always made a clear manifestation of such a disposition. In former declarations it had been said that his Majesty concurred with his allies, nearly at the same time when the Emperor, by his declaration in Flanders, talked of treating the inhabitants as those of a conquered country, and General Wurmser, by his declaration in Alsace, would acknowledge no authority that had not been instituted under the old government. We never had such intentions as the tenour of these declarations clearly indicated; but the French were thus afforded grounds to think we had; and to remove that impression any thing we now declared must be explicit and unequivocal. He had wished for a counter-revolution in France, not to restore the old government, God forbid! but to substitute some rational and steady system in the place of anarchy and crimes. He approved of the war, in the first instance, because he hoped that the people of France, seeing a power in the arms of the allies, that could afford them aid and protection, would rescue themselves from the oppression under which they were held. But if experience had proved, that his hopes were too sanguine, was there inconsistency in changing his opinion, when the ground was changed upon which he had formed it? He thought it more consistent, more fair and manly, to avow the change and the reasons that had produced it. This he had taken the earliest opportunity of doing. If circumstances were now less favourable for opening a door to negotiation, than on the first day of the session, that was not imputable to him. If Parliament had met as early as at first intended, and pacific language been then adopted, perhaps the late events that had rendered negotiation more difficult, might have been prevented. The great error of those who argued on the other side was their forgetting that we had only a choice of evils. Such a peace as could be made with the present government of France was an evil, but a less evil than continuing the war on the principles which had hitherto been supposed to direct it, and a far less evil than such a peace as necessity might oblige us ultimately to accept of. He never thought that we possessed force sufficient to change the government of France, without the concurrence of the great body of the French people; but he had thought if our hopes of that concurrence should fail, we had force sufficient to defend ourselves. Our internal dangers he had never considered as great.

great as they had been represented, and he thought them at this period less than before; but we must take care that we did not, by persisting in war, excite discontents among the people, who were but too ready to impute the hardships they felt from unavoidable causes to the misconduct of Government. Another great reason for wishing to negotiate was, that a counter-revolution in France was much more likely to be effected by peace than by war. By whatever means the French people were forced into the armies, it was evident that when there, by universal sympathy, they agreed in pressing outwards upon the foreign enemy, regardless of what was passing in the interior. If the armies were not so employed, either in consequence of having no foreign enemy, or of being less formidably opposed, they would probably turn their attention to the internal affairs of France; and on this ground he thought a counter-revolution more likely to happen at present than when the allies were upon the frontier of France. A nation of great force and high spirit must naturally feel indignant at the idea of our avowed intention to change their government. Let that idea be done away, and the sentiments which had inspired so much of their energy would subside.

Mr. Wilberforce said, he had read a pamphlet lately published by a very ingenious man, whom he believed to be particularly well informed with respect to French affairs, and he there found that the people abhorred the emigrants, detested the combined powers, and hated the Convention. If that representation was true, as they abhorred the emigrants under the idea that they had excited the war, and detested the combined powers as believing that their object was to conquer France, peace would allow their hatred of the Convention free scope to act. Instead of this, we were inflaming every passion that operated against us by employing corps of emigrants to prosecute the war. Would the Chancellor of the Exchequer say, that supposing his own account of the internal state of France to be true, he thought it possible that a people so oppressed and aggrieved, could abstain from demolishing a government to which in peace they must impute all their sufferings? The very pains taken to exterminate all sentiments of religion, which by teaching men to look for their happiness in another state rendered them more patient under affliction, would contribute to make them less capable of quiet submission to hardships which they thought themselves able to remove.—The argument derived from the state of their finances had weight; but experience had shewn it to be fallacious, or, at least, such as ought not implicitly to be relied upon. Their means of carrying on the war, to whatever new expedients they

they might be obliged to resort, he was persuaded would end only with the physical resources of the country. However much their assignats were depreciated, they might continue issuing them as long as they were worth any thing; and the Chancellor of the Exchequer would not suppose them restrained by principle from issuing three times the amount of the property they held out as the security for their paper currency. The circulation of these assignats, and the sale of confiscated property, would progressively augment the number of persons interested in maintaining a system upon which depended the value of their assignats and their purchases. These were powerful reasons for thinking, that the resistance of the present government would always be great, in proportion to the pressure of external force. When the grand confederacy was formed, it was hoped that the royalists would be able to co-operate effectually within France; but was there any such hope now remaining? To negotiate, it was said, must be humiliating. He never wished us to send to Paris, and sue for peace; but every man knew that there were modes, by which nations at war might sound the dispositions of each other, and afterwards negotiate, without humiliation to either. While we had such resources and such force, our inclinations to negotiate could not be misconstrued. Were we to have partial successes, or even to succeed in destroying the French government, there again we should have only a choice of evils, for the new government could not be soon expected to be quiet, and must be guaranteed by the powers that assisted in establishing it. He quoted Hume, who pointedly stated, that the English nation always manifested too great a propensity to go to war, and too great obstinacy in continuing it; as a proof of this characteristic feature, that the terms obtained by the peace of Ryswick, in 1697, had been offered and rejected in 1692; that the terms obtained by the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, in 1748, had been rejected in 1743; and that thence our allies always reckoned upon our force as their own, and expected to make war at our expence. Mr. Wilberforce concluded with observing, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer's arguments all proceeded upon the supposition that the republican government of France must be destroyed before we can treat—a position which, he owned, he could not accede to; at the same time he declared he disapproved of the amendment as containing nothing specific, and therefore moved as an amendment to change the words of the motion, as he had suggested in the course of his speech.

*Mr. H. Thornton* approved of the general purport of the original motion, although he disliked some of the words. He



thanked the Chancellor of the Exchequer for giving way so far as he had done, and for not holding such high language as he had held upon former occasions. The disposition towards peace that now seemed prevailing in the House would, he was convinced, give great satisfaction to the country.

*Mr. M. Montague* was sorry that the amendment did not appear sufficiently explicit to certain Gentlemen. He was sure it would be satisfactory to many, who had thought the minister's former language too strong. He then descanted on the humiliation that must necessarily attend suing for peace, and the impolicy of abandoning the war, when we had so great a force, and our resources for the next campaign provided on such easy terms.

*Mr. Fox* entered into an ample discussion of the great question before the House. He began by desiring the original motion and the two amendments to be read; and said, that, before he proceeded to give his reasons for preferring the original motion of his Hon. Friend, to that which had been made by Mr. Wilberforce, though the difference between them was not very essential, he must take notice of the amendment which had been so unexpectedly made by the Right Hon. Gentleman.—He said unexpectedly made; because, when the motion of his Hon. Friend was originally announced, which was three weeks ago, the terms of it even were settled; for his Hon. Friend, with more candour than prudence, had stated the precise words upon which they were to be at issue.—The Right Hon. Gentleman pledged himself to come to issue upon these words: But, however, he did not now feel so bold as he did three weeks ago; he did not chuse to meet the question directly. In his conscience, the Right Hon. Gentleman had said, he believed the majority of the people were still for the war. This was his declaration; but the House and the Public would infer from his conduct, that he had not very great confidence in the truth of his own declaration; for, instead of meeting the question, which he had pledged himself to do, he had proposed an amendment, by which he was to avoid a direct decision on it. In his speech, indeed, he still denied the proposition of his Hon. Friend. Then, why not fairly and openly negative it by a vote? After which, if he wished for a declaration, he might have moved his own amendment, as a specific question. He took this course, he said, to avoid misrepresentation; and, but for his desire of avoiding a misrepresentation, which he had never incurred, he would have negatived the original question; when on the other side, the Hon. Secunder of his amendment confessed, that, but for that amendment, he would have voted for the original question.

What

What then was the true meaning and intention of all this petty warfare, but that the amendment was designed to evade the great and material question, upon which the Right Hon. Gentleman stood committed, and to delude the House by a little temporary concession which meant nothing? Already the matter was loaded with contradictions; the mover and the seconder were at variance; the one affirmed, the other denied, and the whole was done merely to draw us from the clear specific question, that had been for so many days in the contemplation of the House. The Right Hon. Gentleman was undoubtedly a man of superior talents, but those talents being directed to delusion and quibbling, rather than to what was grand, manly, and open, he did not shew himself possessed of a mind equal to the occasion. Instead of meeting the exigency of our present situation with measures proportioned to our critical condition, he seemed only anxious, by a little evasive management for the day, to gain over a few votes of irresolute Members, as if a few votes more or less could alter the eternal nature of truth and falsehood, to baffle a few petitions that might be coming to Parliament; as if by lulling some few individuals into a continuance of their apathy for a time, he could extricate the nation from the deplorable situation into which he had plunged it. These were not the resources of a great mind; this was not the conduct of a Statesman in a moment like the present; it was as false to himself in policy, as it was unworthy of the occasion; for it could serve only to deaden the feelings of mankind for the day, and would collect the public indignation to burst upon him with greater force when the delusion was past. As to the amendment itself, which the Right Hon. Gentleman had moved, though he disliked it in many particulars, yet in some things he did not dislike it. In so far as it stated, that there was nothing in the present form of the government of France, which prevented our negotiating with them, he must approve of the proposition. He had moved an amendment both this year and the last, to the same effect.

Little did he think, when he was making such proposition, that he was only speaking the sentiments of his Majesty's ministers. But these ministers, it seems, were the victims of misrepresentation. So powerful it seemed was the Opposition, so full of the means, so full of wealth, and so invested with the influence of bribes, places, pensions, jobs, contracts, and emoluments of every kind, and had so much the means of circulating newspapers, that they had it in their power successfully to misrepresent his Majesty's ministers, and to mislead and delude the Public, so as effectually to taint and abuse the public mind,

and to make them the unhappy subjects of their misrepresentation. What had they done? They had for two years successfully moved an Amendment to the Address to his Majesty on the first day of the session of Parliament, that there was nothing in the form of the government of France that ought to prevent this country from negotiating with them for peace, and for this they had been called the advocates of France, Jacobins, Republicans, the enemies of their King and countrymen, who were desirous to lower the British Government and prostrate it at the feet of France, to introduce French principles, anarchy, and atheism into England, and even tending to destroy the constitution of England, and to bring his Majesty to the block. All this, however, was over, and it was found, though they did not know it, that in reality they were speaking only the sentiments of ministers. We were come to a crisis when all this shuffling would be found unavailing, when these delusions would no longer succeed; their own contradiction was a good omen for the country, it proved that the unfortunate Speech of his Majesty at the opening of the session had made a serious impression on the public mind; the Right Hon. Gentleman therefore found, that he must soften and lower his language; he must attempt to do away the effects of that absurd, impolitic, and he might say diabolical Speech which he had put into the mouth of his Majesty, in which our gracious Sovereign had been made to stand between Heaven and the happiness of mankind; had been made to pronounce the doom of millions, and to proclaim an almost eternal war, for no possible purpose of rational benefit to his species; and that too, when all other Princes of Europe, awakened from the delusion into which they had been equally led by their ministers, had seen their error, and manifested their dispositions to peace. He desired to know what was the meaning of the present conduct? Was he to understand that the Right Hon. Gentleman meant to negative the proposition of his Hon. Friend? In truth he had abandoned all hope of understanding him at all. If he meant to negative it, why not do so by a vote? Mr. Fox said, he knew that the present Administration was composed of various and discordant characters. He did not know whether they all agreed in the present proposition, it would soon be seen whether they did so or no; but he could say that it would not redound much to their honour. If he were called upon to describe it, he should say, it went far enough to disgrace the new colleagues of the Right Hon. Gentleman, but not far enough to restore to him the confidence of the country. As to the arguments that had been used upon the occasion, he should have little to say. There had

been so much novelty in his conduct that day, that he had not thought it necessary to introduce any novelty into his reasoning. The same trite, hackneyed, and refuted arguments, with which they had been fatigued so often, were again renewed. France was declining fast in her resources, and this was a matter of rejoicing to England! How long were they to go on rejoicing in this decline? Their assignats were at a discount; there were a number of royalists; and much ridicule was thrown upon a simile of the Hon. Gentleman, who had truly said, that all the same nonsense had been talked during the American war. But it seems we had had success in France. The various revolutions that had been operated in France had been effectuated through our means. This was a most singular argument, and went perhaps further than the Right Hon. Gentleman intended, for it so happened that those revolutions had been good or bad, in proportion as we had been beaten or prosperous. Whenever we had made the slightest impression upon France, or had the appearance of temporary good fortune, it was sure to be followed by, and perhaps to have produced some violent and dreadful revolution, accomplished by the horrors of massacre and devastation. On the contrary, whenever we had been defeated and forced to fly from the territory of France, they had never failed to subside into a comparative tranquillity, and to have their internal condition meliorated. The argument of the Right Hon. Gentleman was therefore, that if they would permit him to go on in a system of disasters and defeats, it was incalculable what good it might do in France. Thus, when the Duke of Brunswick had penetrated to within sixty miles of Paris, there happened the revolution fatal to the monarchy, of the 10th of August. When we were in possession of Toulon, there happened the shocking and diabolical massacres at Lyons; but no sooner had we evacuated the place, than they began to make atonement for the scandalous devastations. Immediately after the battle of Fleurus there happened the fall of Robespierre; and certainly it was true, that in proportion as we had been discomfited and driven from the French territory, whenever the French felt themselves relieved from our attack, they had exerted themselves for their own deliverance from internal tyranny; and nothing could be more natural than this; for animated by the enthusiasm of the cause of liberty, when attacked, as they were, they gave up every consideration, but that of preserving their independence; but when relieved from this fear they had as constantly rid themselves of their domestic tyrant. It was said that ministers never had proposed to themselves the conquest of France. The conquest of France never was imputed to them; it was only said that they had proposed to

to themselves an object, which nothing but the conquest of France could obtain. He had long ago stated his opinion on the extravagance of that proposition, and his sentiments were in print. Surely any man who ever did flatter himself with the possibility of making any impression on France would now be convinced of his error. A remarkable expression used in the American war was most applicable to this : It was said by a Member of that House, so early as in the year 1777 or 1778, that he had looked at the American army every way : He had looked at their front, he had looked at their rear, he had looked at their flanks, and he could not *accommodate* himself any where : And yet, after this opinion of a general officer, the war had been continued for four or five years. In the same manner we might truly be said to have tried France : We had tried the East, the North, the South, and we could not accommodate ourselves any where. He hoped in God we did not mean to continue the experiment, as we had done in the case of America. It was said, as an argument against the proposition of his Hon. Friend, that it would bind the hands of ministers in negotiating. It would certainly be impossible for them, after such a resolution, to say to the persons holding the government of France, that they could not treat with them ; but so far would that be from binding their hands, that it would remove an obstacle, and surely it could not prevent them from stipulating the terms of peace. In truth, without this declaration, there would be an obstacle in the way of treating, since the persons holding the government of France knew, that it had been uniformly declared by our ministers that they could not treat with them. But the consistency of the House of Commons stood in the way. He thought that there might now be an end of the declamatory nonsense. In all questions of policy, nations must yield to imperious necessity : It would be obstinacy and not honour to persevere in an opinion, when you became convinced that it was wrong ; it was plain that men might at first have thought the present war just and necessary, who now, if not convinced of the contrary, entertained serious doubts ; and surely they would act more according to the rules of honour, to confess their errors, the moment they were convinced of them. But there was nothing more curious than to hear the Right Hon. Gentleman talk of the consistency of the House of Commons. What would become of his old steady friends, the words *existing circumstances* ? In the case of Oczakoff, he had not hesitated to retract without a blush, when he found the public opinion against him. He came forward and said that our means were not equal to the object : Why could not he therefore now compare the  
object

object with the means? Surely the disasters that had happened, and the change in the present case, more than in the Russian armament, would amply justify him for retracting his opinion. He would do it with great advantage to himself; it would give vigour to England, and would take it from France. But why, it was said, should we be the first to negotiate? It would be a humiliation forsooth to propose to treat because we were unsuccessful. Upon this principle, it was almost hopeless that we could ever treat; for could it be expected that the French Government would be the first to propose to negotiate when they knew that our ministers had twenty times said, that no possible peace could be made while they continued in power? Let Englishmen ask themselves what would be their feelings if the same language had been used to us that we have used to them? If, for instance, they had declared in the Convention that they never would treat for peace with England until there should be operated a reform in the government of England; would not every Englishman die before he would submit to ask to negotiate under such a declaration?—Yet such a declaration we had made towards France. We must therefore do away the effect of our own arrogant and impolitic expressions; and he had no hesitation in saying what he believed in his heart, that if we took away that obstacle, we should have peace; or if not, we should fight them upon equal terms; we should take from the cause of their enthusiasm; we should take from them that which aroused every national feeling; which had carried them to those unparalleled exertions that had astonished and confounded the world. They would then no longer feel that they had to fight to extremity, or that they were besieged in their own country for daring to give to their own country such a government as they liked. Did he propose to unman one ship, to disband one regiment? No, on the contrary his proposition was to add vigour to the country, and surely we should fight as well after we had made a declaration, that it was not our intention to reduce any people to slavery. Nor should we treat for peace upon worse terms, if we were to treat before we were reduced to extremity. He referred to the history of the war of King William, and of his having had the wisdom to conceal his design of altering the French government, and applied it to the purpose of his argument. The want of security for the continuance of peace, might be pleaded for going on with any war. There was no positive security. Certainly we should have as much security now as in any former instance. If peace were to take place, they must disband their armies. and, if the mighty machine, which nothing but the diabolical confederacy of despots had put in motion, were once stopped, it would be impossible again to erect it. If this country

country had acted right in interfering to prevent that diabolical confederacy, all might have been well; France, though perhaps a more powerful neighbour, would have been less obnoxious; the French King might have been still upon his throne, and all the horrors and massacres that had desolated that unhappy country might have been prevented. He ridiculed the idea of the influx of French principles into this country, for our own constitution could only flourish in Great Britain: It had been more deeply rooted in our affections by the fatal experiments that had been made in France. He called to the recollection of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the memorable expression of his venerable father, that they should die on the last breach before they granted the independence of America, and that the first act of his political life was to sign that very independence which his father had deprecated. Necessity dictated the act, and he must now retract in the same manner his system with respect to France. Mr. Fox concluded a long and brilliant speech by saying, that he certainly preferred the motion of his Hon. Friend which he had opened and supported with such luminous argument and irresistible persuasion, to the amendment of Mr. Wilberforce; but at the same time that amendment should have his support, if the House thought fit to prefer the one proposition to the other.

*Mr. Dundas* said, he had always been adverse to making declarations, and particularly so while the war was continuing, because it could answer no other purpose but to give the enemy courage and spirits to act against us. There was one of a nature something similar to the present towards the conclusion of the American war, which he had opposed, but unsuccessfully; but the consequence of it was, that the Executive Government felt itself most completely fettered in its subsequent negotiations for peace; and such would be the case in the present instance, if it were passed.

The principal argument upon which the motion had been maintained was, that if we did not make peace at this crisis, we should not have such good terms if the war were continued. This was the whole point in dispute. How did Gentlemen know that the tide of war would not turn in our favour? There was every thing to hope upon the subject—at least it was a fair presumption, that our situation would not be worse if we continued the war.

Surely Gentlemen would not say, that now, when the enemy had conquered the Netherlands and Holland, and were likely to have a strong navy, that we ought to seize that very moment of time to make proposals for peace.

He wished however to ask, whether the advocates for peace meant to say that Holland should be given up as a possession to France?

France? that was a position which he was sure no Gentleman would dare to advance in that House.

If then they did not mean that, they should not harass the Executive Government with such a motion as the present. The Right Hon. Gentleman had said, that ministers were afraid to negative the motion. So far from it, he should have been inclined to give his direct negative to the motion, had not the prudence of his Right Hon. Friend suggested the amendment. He was extremely happy that the amendment had been proposed, and augured well of its effect, as it seemed to provoke the anger of Gentlemen on the other side of the House; and was calculated to avert all that misrepresentation which would have been spread round the country if the motion had been directly negatived.

One of the charges often refuted, but still renewed, was, that the ministers of this country had formed an intention of restoring the old government in France. To this argument, he could only say, in direct terms, that they had no such idea at any one period of the war, and he hoped Gentlemen would not have recourse to it.

Mr. Dundas read extracts from the correspondence between M. Chauvelli and Lord Grenville, to prove that the original cause of the war was the adoption of principles which were incompatible with the safety of any government.

*Mr. Wentworth* and *Mr. Hippisley Cox* spoke in favour of the motion.

*Mr. Sommers Cocks* rose, merely that, from the similarity of names, he might not be supposed to have given his vote for the motion, which should have his decided negative.

*Sir Francis Basset* spoke a few words. After which the House called again loudly for the question.

*Mr. Grey* said, he hoped that on so very important a question, and under such peculiar circumstances, he should not be denied the indulgence usually granted by the House to a Member making a motion, and assured the House that he had neither power nor inclination to abuse it.

The House he thought must agree with him, that he had great reason to complain of the manner in which the Right Hon. the Chancellor of the Exchequer had treated his motion, after what had passed upon the subject on the first night of the sessions. On that night, when he gave notice of this motion, the House would recollect he had called his Majesty's ministers attention to the wording of it, in order that, to avoid all cavil on the subject, they might understand each other; and the Right Hon. Chancellor of the Exchequer then said, that he



understood it, and was prepared to discuss the question arising upon it whenever it should be brought forward.

Mr. Grey declared, that the Right Hon. Gentleman should deny this proposition was extraordinary; and that he should, after so pledging himself to meet the question fairly, come forward with an expedient to evade it, was treating him he thought very unfairly. The Right Hon. Gentleman might have put a direct negative on the motion, but he was aware that if he did so, he would have been committed farther than his caution would allow, and pinned down to a declaration never to negotiate with the present government of France. He therefore got rid of it by a side-wind, and in the shape of an amendment, left it barely possible, in case of extreme urgency, to negotiate, while he shuffled off the substantial object of the motion for the present. But the Right Hon. Gentleman might rely upon it, this would not in the end answer his purpose; it might answer the purpose of the House, but would not settle public opinion. The people, on reading the debates of that night, would see the nature of the expedient, and though it might get him a few votes for the night, it would never, he was sure, get him the support of the Public.

Having said thus much on the point, as touched by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Grey directed his reply to Mr. Secretary Dundas; and remarked, that that Gentleman's Right Hon. Friend (Mr. Pitt) had said that the question at issue was, whether the danger and difficulties of our situation were so great as to make it prudent for us, at present, to propose to our enemies a negotiation for peace? While the Right Hon. Secretary, on the contrary, maintained that it was not possible for us to be in a worse state for negotiation—the latter assertion he hoped was unfounded, but he desired to know on which of the two the Right Hon. Gentlemen wished to rest their argument?

Either supposition would answer his purpose; for on the one hand, if our dangers and difficulties were not great, this was the time to hope for a peace with some advantage—not to wait for an humiliating reverse. . On the other hand, if we are in a very bad state, the sooner we made peace the better. The Right Hon. Secretary had called upon him to say, what the terms were on which he would make peace? That was a question which he thought the Right Hon. Gentleman had no right to ask. He would, however, say, "On such terms as at the time of negotiation might appear to be most honourable and advantageous." He would in return ask the Right Hon. Gentleman, when and on what terms he would propose to negotiate?

tiate? Would he wait for the reconquering of Holland and the recovery of the Austrian Netherlands? If we were to wait till then, peace would be far indeed from this ill-fated country.

The Right Hon. Gentleman had said, that we were in the worst possible state for negotiation at this time, and would thence infer, that we ought to wait for some alteration for the better, before we made proposals for a peace. Suppose that we obtained a victory, would not the Right Hon. Secretary's friend (Mr. Pitt) say, that our increasing prosperity was a reason for continuing the war?

Mr. Grey contended, that the amendment went, in fact, to exclude the possibility of peace till the present government of France was overthrown, though the Right Hon. Gentleman who moved it endeavoured to slur it over. For his part, he could not see any end that the reasoning of ministers left us to hope to the war. The minister would not treat with Brissot's party—nor with Robespierre's party—nor now with the moderate party: In fact, he appeared determined not to treat with any, and assigned for a reason, the frequent change of rulers in that country. Supposing another change, would not that, he demanded, be, on the Right Hon. Gentleman's own mode of arguing, one reason more against peace? If asked what security we should have had, if we made peace with Brissot or Robespierre, he would answer, "Look to the other nations who have made treaties with them, and see if they have found any great breach of faith in the French"—Nations to whom the Right Hon. Gentleman, he was confident, now looked with envy.

After encountering various other parts of Mr. Dundas's argument, Mr. Grey turned to that respecting the comparative state of the finances of the two countries, and said that so long as the French believed themselves struggling for independence, and we were not, there could be no comparison justly made between them. The resources of France in that case had no end, but in the physical impossibility to raise money. They would give their last shilling, while our people, conscious that we were struggling for a phantom, would feel great difficulty in supporting the war, and particularly as if there was a peace made directly, the expences already incurred by it would amount to fifty-five millions. That bar to negotiation was out of the question.

The Secretary at War said, he would only rise to answer a point that had been started, and on which he conceived he had been much misrepresented, and that was, that he had asserted the restoration of the monarchy in France to be the *sine quâ non*

upon which this country could treat with that. As far as he could recollect, he never made such an assertion.

*Mr. Dundas*, Member for Berkshire, said he would vote for the original question, although he had been disposed to vote in general with ministers.

The question was now loudly called for, when a division took place upon *Mr. Grey's* motion :

<i>For it</i>	-	-	-	86
<i>Against it</i>	-	-	-	269
				<hr/>
<i>Majority</i>	-			183

A division then ensued upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer's amendment :

<i>For it</i>	-	-	-	254
<i>Against it</i>	-	-	-	90
				<hr/>
<i>Majority</i>	-			164

The gallery doors were not opened again; but after *Mr. Wilberforce's* amendment was disposed of, *Mr. Sheridan* proposed a third amendment, to be added to the Chancellor of the Exchequer's resolution. He charged the minister with having selected words of ambiguity and prevarication to mislead the Public, on a subject and on a day peculiarly devoted to perspicuity and explanation. The wish of the country was for a speedy peace, without regarding the construction or principles of the present existing government of France. He was confident the minister, and many who voted with him, meant differently. His amendment would bring their meaning to a fair trial; if negatived, the country would understand that peace was as far off as ever, and that the war was still, in fact, carried on to change the Government of France.

This brought on a warm altercation, and particularly between *Mr. Fox* and *Mr. Windham*.

The addition proposed by *Mr. Sheridan* was—

" And that this House are not of opinion, that there are circumstances in the present existing Government of France which preclude all negotiation with the said Government, or render it incapable of maintaining the accustomed relations of peace and amity with other countries."

It passed in the negative.

The House, at five in the morning, adjourned till Wednesday.

*Lijf*

*List of the Minority on the following Motion of Mr. Grey, on Monday the 26th January,—"That the existence of the present Government of France ought not to be considered as precluding, at this time, a Negotiation for Peace."*

Anson, Thomas	Litchfield	Huffey, William	New Sarum
Antonie, Lee	Great Marlow	Jekyll, Joseph	Calne
Aubrey, Sir John	Clithero	Jervoise, C. Jervoise	Yarmouth, Isle of Wight
Bankes, Henry	Corff Castle	Kemp, Thomas	Lewes
Barrham, J. P.	Stockbridge	Knight, R. Payne	Ludlow
Baring, Sir Francis	Wycombe	Ladbroke, Robert	Oakhampton
Baring, John	Exeter	Lambton, W. H.	Durham
Bouverie, Hon. E.	Northampton	Langston, John	Bridgewater
Bouverie, Hon. W.	Old Sarum	Lechmere, Edmund	Worcester
Bradyll, Wilton	Carlisle	Lemon, Sir W.	Cornwall Co.
Buller, James	Exeter	Long, Samuel	Ilchester
Burch, J. R.	Thetford	Ludlow, Earl	Huntingdon Co.
Byng, George	Middlesex	M'Leod, Col. N.	Inverness Co.
Church, J. B.	Wendover	Maitland, Hon. T.	Jedburgh
Clayton, Sir R.	Blechingly	Martin, James	Tewkesbury
Coke, T. W.	Norfolk Co.	Milbanke, Ralph	Durham Co.
Coke, Edward	Derby	Milner, Sir W.	York
Coke, D. Parker	Nottingham	Moffyn, Sir R.	Flint County
Colhoun, William	Bedford	North, Dudley	Great Grimsby
Courtenay, John	Tamworth	Peirse, Henry	Northallerton
Coxe, H. Hippefley	Somerfet Co.	Plumer, William	Hertford Co.
Crespigny, T. C.	Sudbury	Powlett, Powlett	Totness
Crewe, John	Chester Co.	Rawdon, Hon. John	Appleby
Curwen, J. Christian	Carlisle	Ridley, Sir M. W.	Newcastle
Davers, Sir Charles	Bury	Ruffel, Lord William	Surrey County
Dimfdale, Baron	Hertford	St. John, St. Andrew	Bedford Co.
Dolben, Sir W.	Oxford University	Sheridan, R. B.	Stafford
Dundas, Charles	Berkshire Co.	Smith, William	Camelford
Erskine, Hon. T.	Portsmouth	Spencer, Lord R.	Wareham
Featherston, Sir H.	Ditto	Sturt, Charles	Bridport
Fitzpatrick, General	Tavistock	Tarleton, General	Liverpool
Fletcher, Sir Henry	Cumberland County	Taylor, Clement	Maidstone
Foley, Hon. Edward	Worcester Co.	Thornton, Henry J.	Southwark
Folkes, Sir M. B.	King's Lynn	Thorold, Sir John	Lincoln Co.
Fox, Rt. Hon. C. J.	Westminster	Townshend, Lord J.	Knareborough
Francis, Philip	Blechingly	Vanfittart, George,	Berkshire Co.
Glover, Richard	Penrith	Vyner, Robert	Thirsk
Grey, Charles	Northumberland Co.	Walwyn, James	Hereford
Harcourt, John	Ilchester	Wharton, John	Beverly
Hare, James	Knareborough	Whitbread, S. jun.	Bedford
Harrison, John	Great Grimsby	Whitmore, Thomas	Bridgnorth
Hill, Sir Richard	Salop County	Wilberforce, W.	York County
Howard, Henry	Arundel	Wilbraham, R.	Bodmyn
		Wynne, R. W.	Denbigh Co.
		Wyndham, Hon. P. C.	Midhurst

TELLERS.

Sheridan, R. B.

Whitbread, S. jun.

Se.

Second Division on Mr. Wilberforce's Amendment, in addition to the above-mentioned Gentlemen.

Bond, John	Corff Castle	Mills, William	St. Ives
Ford, Sir Francis	Newcastle Under Line	Powlett, Charles	Truro.
Gordon, James	Truro	Salisbury, Robert	Monmouth Co.
		Wilmot, John	Coventry.

## HOUSE OF LORDS.

TUESDAY, Jan. 27.

The Committee appointed to inspect precedents respecting the mode of proceeding on the trial of Warren Hastings, reported progress.

### MOTION FOR PEACE.

The order of the day being read,

*The Duke of Bedford* rose, he said, in pursuance of the notice which he had given on a former day. He declared he felt so deeply impressed by the magnitude of the subject which he had to bring before their Lordships, as affecting the state of Europe, and the happiness of millions, that, whilst he called the attention of their Lordships to the importance of the occasion, he felt it necessary to claim a particular degree of indulgence for himself. The motion which he should have the honour to offer before he sat down, had been for some time before the House, and then laid on their Lordships table; but as it might not have been read by some of their Lordships, he should take the liberty to restate it. His motion was to the following tenor:

“ That no form of government which may prevail in France, should preclude a negotiation, or prevent a peace, when the latter could be made consistently with the interest, the honour, and the security of this country.”

His Majesty's ministers had informed Parliament that the war was to be continued; it became therefore essentially necessary that their Lordships should clearly understand upon what plan they were to continue the war in future; the people of this country ought to be distinctly told what they were fighting for; and it was likewise necessary that the people of France should know what they were fighting against. If their Lordships should think fit to negative his motion, they would render the prospect of peace more distant than even the proceedings of ministers, or more particularly their language and the language of their friends. That language the French must

must have heard, and it would well become their Lordships wisdom to obviate, by their votes, the ill effects such language evidently tended to produce. It would well become them to shew the people of this country, and the world at large, that the House of Lords was not a party to the violence which the language of ministers was calculated to excite. Their Lordships had never held such language, and therefore he was not calling upon them to contradict themselves, by asking them to disavow it. To do this appeared to be absolutely necessary at the present moment, in order to put a stop to the calamities which it had brought upon Europe. Their Lordships had often heard it asserted, that this was a war *usque ad internecionem*—language unfit for the most barbarous times; a sentiment so fraught with cruelty, and so dangerous to the principles of all good government, that to call upon their Lordships to contradict it, was to call upon their policy, as well as their justice.

The war, in its commencement, he admitted to have been popular; it was undoubtedly approved of by a great majority; but that majority had been obtained by delusion, and successful attempts to captivate the passions, the better to mislead the judgment of the people. The same means were still employed to impede the increasing unpopularity of the war, but could not, as their Lordships must feel, operate much longer; the country being at length roused by a sense of the dangerous consequences which the war had produced, and giving manifest signs of a pretty general wish for its conclusion. Those who were against taking any steps towards peace, had contended, that to do so would tie up the hands of ministers, and oblige them to accept of whatever terms the enemy thought fit to grant. His motion had no such tendency; all he asked their Lordships to declare was, that they were ready to accede to peace, as soon as it could be obtained with safety to the interests of the country and with honour. He was aware that the same delusions would be again attempted to impose upon their Lordships judgment, the same excitements to rouse their passions. They would be told, that, although peace was highly desirable, this was not the proper time for obtaining it. His motion would bind their Lordships to no particular time, but leave both time and terms to the discretion of his Majesty's ministers, who were responsible for their exercise of that discretion.

The arguments commonly urged against every proposition tending to facilitate the attainment of peace, were—that no peace concluded with the present Government of France could be permanent; that to *sue* for peace would be as injurious to  
our

our interest as inconsistent with our honour. No man who recommended removing the obstacles to peace had ever proposed suing for it; no man had ever uttered the word. Much as he thought peace to be desired, he would scorn to sue for it. The danger to this country, from the introduction of French principles, was next alleged: Our allies, it was said, were preparing to make greater exertions; and the desperate situation of the French finances rendered it impossible for them to continue the war on the same extended scale of vigour, as they had hitherto done, to which it had been owing that they were enabled to baffle our efforts. Conscious of the insufficiency of their own arguments, ministers resorted to another expedient, and attacked the passions of their Lordships, by telling them that the war was the cause of humanity, of religion, and of God.

To negotiate, ministers said, would be dishonourable. How, they asked, could we make the first overtures for peace, when it was notorious that the French had been the aggressors? The question of aggression was by no means so clear as they chose to represent it; but admitting it, for the sake of argument, to be so, let their Lordships consider what endless scenes of blood Europe must have exhibited, had it been the predominant principle of courts that no state could, without dishonour, manifest a disposition to peace, unless it had been the aggressor in the commencement of war. We had often offered to treat when our arms were successful, although we had not been the aggressors; and in the American war, which was unsuccessful, we had even suspended offensive operations as a preliminary to negotiation. To prove that the French had been the aggressors, the decree of November 19, 1792, had been much insisted upon; and the argument came with greater weight from being urged soon after their Lordships, in a dutiful Address, had expressed their satisfaction in hearing of a Speech from the Throne, in which his Majesty told them that he had carefully abstained from all interference in the affairs of France, and, in the disputes between the Continental Powers, observed a strict neutrality. He was ready to admit that we had a right to interfere in the internal government of France, if the French declared an intention of interfering in ours. But let their Lordships call to mind how anxious the French had been to retract this declaration, and to do it away. Their Minister for Foreign Affairs offered any explanation that might be required. The same inclination was shewn by speeches in the Convention. After a speech by Danton, setting forth, that, although friends to the liberty of all mankind, they ought to correct the errors of momentary enthusiasm, a decree

was passed, declaring that the French would not interfere in the government of other countries; and in their new constitution an article was inserted, that they would not interfere in the government of any other people, nor suffer any other people to interfere in theirs. They had therefore renounced this offensive principle, and we ought to do so too.

The Duke produced a few short documents in support of his argument, which he read at the table, particularly an extract from Danton's speech, and the decree that followed it.

In answer to the assertion that no permanent peace could be made with the present French Government, he was almost ashamed to state what he had formerly urged, but with so little impression, that none of their Lordships thought it even worthy of being refuted. He thought it, however, so conclusive, that till he could so far call their Lordships attention to it as to receive an answer, he should not cease to urge it;—when refused, he should bow with submission to better reasoning than his own. What was meant, he would ask, by a permanent peace? Where, in the history of Europe, was a single instance of a permanent peace to be found, in the absolute sense of the word? A permanent peace, in any rational and practical acceptation of the term, was a peace on such conditions as each of the contracting parties had a right to expect, and was consequently likely to prove mutually satisfactory. An equitable peace was the only one likely to be permanent; a nation, compelled to accept of any other, smarting under a sense of injury, would observe it no longer than weakness and necessity compelled. Were he to argue on relative permanence, he should think it more probable that peace with a republic must be lasting than with a monarchy either absolute or limited. In a republic, the question of peace or war must be examined by many minds, it must be debated; whereas, in a monarchy, one individual might decide: And while human judgment was liable to mistake, the decision of one must be less to be relied upon than that of the many. Not that a monarch is to be so suspected of contempt and disregard of his people as to squander inconsiderately their treasure and their blood; but as monarchs are but men, heated by the same imagination, and hurried on by the same passions, alike the slaves of their caprices and their pride, there must assuredly be less restriction and more danger.

Their Lordships were exhorted to persevere in the war, because of the danger to be apprehended from the introduction of French principles. Were Englishmen, then, so disaffected to the constitution? were they so partial to the institutions of



other countries in preference to those of their own, as to be ready to abandon them on the first suggestion? But it was said, that French Jacobins would come into this country.—Who were these Jacobins? Were they the Members of the Jacobin Club? or was it meant to brand the whole people of France with the name of Jacobin? In what situation would the French Jacobin come here? Was there any thing so peculiarly captivating in his language or address, as to make him formidable? He must tell the people of this country, “Do as we have done in France; destroy your monarchy; abolish the House of Lords, dismiss the House of Commons, sweep away all your ancient institutions, and establish liberty and equality.” The Englishman would hardly be so dull as not to ask,—“What have you established in the room of all you have abolished? and how do you know that what you promise would be better than what I possess?” He would ask—“How came you to forsake all the blessings of your own liberty, to come here, where you say there is none?” If the Jacobin should reply that his universal philanthropy had induced him to become a voluntary exile, to relinquish the blessings of liberty at home, in order to preach liberty to strangers, the Englishman would probably ask—“What have you gained by your liberty, and what have you suffered? Is not your agriculture impaired, your manufactures and commerce ruined, poverty and want brought upon your citizens, who have survived the prisons, or escaped the executions and the slaughter to which you have been led without distinction? Do you not at present mourn the loss of friends or relations, who have fallen by the hands of the executioner, or the sword of the enemy?”—He had heard much of the introduction of French money into this country, by Jacobins. The destruction of the Jacobins at Paris, was once said to be the object of the war. That was now effected, for the Convention had shut up the Hall, and decreed that the Club should meet no more. Where were these Jacobins to get the money? If the situation of France were such as ministers described it, even the government could not afford to send money out of the country. But were the people of this country to be calumniated, were their feelings and their understandings to be insulted, by suggesting that they were so easily to be brought out of their principles, and out of their attachment to the institutions of their ancestors?

The next argument for persisting in the war was drawn from the invigorated exertions to be made by our allies, and the desperate state of the French finances. Much more vigorous than those we had hitherto experienced must be the exertions  
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of our allies in order to be of much avail. Need he remind their Lordships that they did not now hear such arguments for the first time ; that they had heard them often, and been repeatedly deceived ? Every one of the declarations made by ministers, had been contradicted by events. This did not rest on his assertion. Let their Lordships look at the proceedings in the Diet of Ratisbon. There they would find that the principal members of the Germanic Body, far from being in a condition to make more vigorous exertions, were convinced of the necessity of endeavouring to obtain peace. Even the Emperor, in his character of Duke of Austria, did not seem averse to peace, although his ministers did not directly accede to the resolution. They proposed a middle course, *viz.* that the whole should be referred to the Emperor, as head of the Germanic Body. The Emperor did not therefore oppose a proposition for peace ; he only wished the time and the mode to be referred to himself. For this there might be weighty reasons. He had not yet got the six millions our ministers had engaged to lend him. When he was sure of the money, he might then think it a fit time to open negotiations. Even the King of Prussia had acceded to the pacific resolution, which was drawn up in the strongest and most explicit terms. Could their Lordships hope for greater exertions on the part of these allies ? Even if they were willing, it was obvious that they were not able, and that their situations and prospects, if the war must be continued, were much more desperate than at the commencement of either of the former campaigns. With respect to the finances of France, he did not pretend to possess sufficient information for such a detail, as it would become him to submit in argument to their Lordships ; but his general conclusion was, that they were not exhausted, as ministers wished us to believe. Supposing them, however, to be nearly exhausted, could we ruin them ? Certainly not. While there was property in the country, the government would find means to get it, for the purpose of maintaining their armies ; while the people were convinced, that the war was a war of extermination, or unconditional submission to the will of a foreign enemy, they would sacrifice their property ; nor was there one of their Lordships, he was convinced, who would not give up nine-tenths of all he possesses, in defence of the kingdom, and the liberties of himself in common with those of the rest of the people. If we could not ruin them in finance, could we hope to outnumber them ? Their population was one-seventh of all Europe ; and add to this the acquisition they had made, with the possession of Holland, where they had not entered as an enemy, but been received as an ally ;

where it was well known that the majority of the people were their friends; where they would receive substantial co-operation, instead of having to retain the country as a conquest.

When he came to examine the other arguments, his Grace said, he found only attempts to excite their Lordships' passions. He had heard their feelings played upon, by telling them that they were embarked in the cause of humanity and of God. When we first embarked in the war, it might perhaps have been thought the cause of humanity, although he had never thought it so. It might have been imagined that we undertook it to save the life of an unfortunate, but much to be lamented Monarch. Soon, however, were we undeceived, and great reason had we to fear that our attempt to save, accelerated the cruel event we deplored. But could it now be called a war in the cause of humanity? Ministers had declared the effects of our hostility. It had produced, they said, the system of terror, at which they railed, and justly railed. It had produced the depreciation of assignats, and that produced the system of fear, with all its horrid train of imprisonment, rapine, insurrection, murder, and massacre. They must then admit, that their policy had aggravated the evils they took up arms to prevent; that it had spread fear, oppression, and blood, over the face of France. If their system of war had made all this necessary let them not boast of it; let it no more be called a war of humanity. Was the death of fifty thousand British subjects who had fallen in the war, of the hundreds of thousands of innocent soldiers on all sides, for to the soldiers could not be imputed the guilt of the leaders they obeyed, a circumstance favourable to the cause of humanity?

Last year it was said, the system of terror could not last, and the prediction had been fulfilled. This year, a new set of men were in possession of the French government, a new Committee of Public Safety acting on new principles—and ministers said the system of moderation could not last. A Committee of Government receiving so many new members every month in the room of others going out by rotation, that men might not be tempted to commit crimes from the hope of impunity in the permanence of their power, was something they could not possibly endure. Here, and he gave them credit for it, they seemed to be actuated by fellow-feeling. They could not but look upon a change of ministers as a thing to be deprecated, as an evil never to be too much guarded against, however incapable or mischievous those ministers might be. It was agreed on all hands that the present state of France was preferable to that in which it had

had been very lately. Surely this was a circumstance for humanity to rejoice in. But what was the language of our humanity? We saw a nation emerging from guilt and blood, its rulers confessing, in some instances punishing, and in many endeavouring to repair the mischiefs they had done. Should we hail this as a favourable omen? Should we indulge in the prospect of reviving reason and returning happiness? Should we endeavour to obviate any difficulties our own conduct may have thrown in the way?—"No," said ministers, "you shall not restore order and justice, but by our means; nothing shall satisfy us but carrying war to your frontiers, and famine to the interior." By this course we should never conquer the armies or the opinions of France; but we might perhaps regenerate the system of violence and blood. It was not in presence of the venerable Bench (of Bishops) opposite, that he would say much on the other part of this topic; but if the principles in which his youth had been instructed were true, it was not for man to assume the office of dispensing the vengeance of God.

If these arguments had failed to make an impression upon their Lordships, he was convinced it must be owing to his feeble manner of stating them, and not to any defect in the arguments themselves. He would add a few words on his first proposition, that to adopt his motion would tend to unite all the people of this country, if the war should continue, and disunite the people of France. During the domination of Robespierre, it was often urged, that when the terror of his despotism was removed, the people would declare themselves in favour of royalty—that prediction, like many others, had failed. Robespierre was gone—oppression had no longer sway, and the favourers of royalty were less numerous than ever. During the despotism of Robespierre, there were constant insurrections quelled only by massacres. Since that period, insurrection had ceased with the oppression that provoked it. Even the war in La Vendée appeared to be almost extinguished, and that not so much by force as by conciliation. When we took possession of Toulon, and talked of carrying the war into the most disaffected part of all France, when we reared the standard of limited monarchy, did the people of the country come to join us? Did we not soon find that the majority, even of the inhabitants of Toulon itself, were against us? When General Wurmser penetrated into Alsace, did the people rise to join him?—A small party negotiating about surrendering Strasburgh, were detected and punished. Did we find royalists or friends to our arms under any denomination in Flanders? When Dumourier, the most popular

popular General the revolutionary army had then known, agreed to join the allies, how many followed him?—A single regiment. Generals had been removed, accused, and executed; every thing, as far as related to their more favourite leaders, had been done by the Convention to disgust the armies; yet in no instance had they abated of that enthusiasm for fighting against the common enemy, which the idea that their country was attacked in order to be conquered, naturally inspired. While we left them in possession of the same motives for resistance, the same resistance they would continue to make. Take away the motive, and its effects would soon fail. It could not be denied that the war was less popular in this country than it had been, no matter to what extent; and in proportion as it became unpopular, our exertions must be enfeebled. There were many who had never given it their zealous support. It was not by the Lords or Commons refusing the supplies that vigorous exertion could alone be restrained. This they could not do but at too great a risk to the country, even for a war of which they disapproved. But although they gave ministers the supplies, they might not give their active co-operation; because that would be approving of the war in its principle, which he would never do, for then he should be implicated in all the butchery, and devastation, and slaughter, to which it had given birth. If their Lordships were to take the other course, and declare that they supported the war not for changing or dictating forms of government for France, but to obtain equitable terms of peace; and the French people, or their rulers, obstinately persist in continuing the war, what feeling would actuate every Englishman, but that we were engaged in a war of necessity; that we were fighting for our liberty, for our existence; and that every sacrifice and every exertion must be made? Instead of going on with remarks, who, while coldly fighting on our side to-day, might possibly fight against us to-morrow, if the French would pay a better price for them, we should fight our own battles like men who felt the value of the stake. The British troops had always fought, and always would fight bravely; but in this contest they fought not with the enthusiasm which the love of liberty inspires, because they knew that for liberty they were not fighting; they knew that they were fighting against the liberty of another people. What would be the difference if the French were to attempt to conquer us? He should be told, perhaps, that they meditated the attempt, and reminded of speeches in the Convention to that effect; of their threatening to carry the war from the banks of the Scheldt to the banks of the Thames, and annihilate

hilate the British government. Let their Lordships call to mind speeches they had heard in that House as bitter and as extravagant, and then they would perhaps think that the former were meant as nothing more than retaliation for the latter. All the former language of ministers held out, that we would never treat till the Jacobins were destroyed. The Jacobins were destroyed, and still we would not treat. What could the people of France or England infer from all this, but that we would never treat till we were allowed to dictate? The Noble Secretary of State had said, that he would not refuse to treat with a good republican government in France; but how were the French to discover what he would think a good republican government, or how could they form it, if we continued to press them by war? They themselves had said that they would postpone forming the important parts of their government till peace. Were their present revolutionary government to be destroyed, they would then have none; would we treat with them in that situation? As the war became unpopular at home, as their Lordships must see it was daily doing, our energy in the prosecution of it would decline, for it was not the money of a country, but the hands and hearts of a people, that gave vigour and exertion. No man was energetic in a war of which he did not see the probable termination; and who could see the termination of a war, continued on the principle of razing a whole nation from the face of the earth? If their Lordships should adopt his motion, they would convince the people that the object of the French in persisting in the war, must be to conquer us; for they had too many successes on the continent to need any more for their own defence; and then we should join heart and hand as one man, we should be animated with equal enthusiasm, we should rise in a mass. Was there a man so cowardly of heart, so dastardly of nature, as not then to incur every sacrifice, to brave every danger? For his part, he would sooner lose his life in defending his own liberty, than in attacking the liberty of another.

Among the arguments adduced to prove the bad state of France, was the excessive dearth of provisions, in consequence of the depreciation of assignats. He was of opinion, that the depreciation of assignats was neither so great in itself, nor by any means such an inconvenience to the French government, as ministers contended. But were French the only assignats depreciated by the war? Our assignats were not the notes of the Bank of England, but our stocks, and these had suffered a depreciation of one third. Did we build our prospects on the hope of a famine in France? God avert a  
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famine from that and every other country; and there was too much apprehension of scarcity at home, for that to be a topic which it would be advisable to urge with the people as an inducement to submit cheerfully to the inevitable sufferings of war. Their Lordships knew of a resolution carried into before the Lord Mayor, and which had been afterwards laid before the ministers, begging that he would exert himself to prevent the evils apprehended from the quantity of corn in the country not being equal to the consumption till harvest. He trusted we were in no real danger of want, but that very reflection should teach us not to exist too much at the prospect of its being the fate of others. He might easily excite their Lordships' passions, by representing to them the condition of the poor, and what they had already suffered in consequence of the war; he might tell them what he himself had witnessed, that many who before were able to obtain a comfortable subsistence by employment from the manufacturers, were not now able to get wherewithal to buy them bread; he might tell also that its effects had been sensibly felt by men of another description, who had seen English assignats depreciate, though certainly not in an equal proportion with those of France; English assignats, the stocks, had fallen from ninety per cent. to near sixty. But he scorned to gain their assent to any proposition by agitating their feelings, when he could not succeed by convincing their understandings. He concluded with moving his resolution.

Lord Grenville began his speech with complimenting the Noble Duke who had just sat down, on the candid and manly way in which he had argued the grounds of his motion; but before he proceeded to notice any part of the main subject, he deemed it necessary to give a direct answer to the misstatement and misapprehensions which had taken place with respect to the sentiments of ministers relative to the war. They had as long as possible endeavoured to avoid hostilities, and had at last only undertaken them in order to repel an unjust aggression on the part of France. His Lordship briefly touched on some of the leading transactions that have been so often stated by ministers in both Houses as the grounds of the war; and after having dispatched that preliminary of his argument, he said, he could not by any means bring himself to believe, that the present was a moment proper or convenient for this country, under the existing circumstances, to adopt the means of negotiating or forwarding negotiation, by the mode pointed out by the Noble Duke in the present motion. He declared, that it had never been his opinion, that this country, through the

the medium of her ministers or executive government, should be bound or tied up from making peace with France or any other government with which it was at war, merely on account of the particular *form* of that government, be it called republican or any other name whatever; but still he contended, that it was essentially necessary for those who have the administration of the affairs of any government in their hands, to take particular care, that in all the measures they pursued, and more particularly in a case of so momentous and highly important a nature, as that of negotiating a peace between two great and powerful nations, they should never for a single moment permit to escape their sight, that most necessary and important of all concerns—security. Security was the object which they had uniformly professed to seek from the present contest. This question of security was intimately connected with the consideration of the situation of the country with which we were to treat. He still believed that a majority of the people of France were more inclined to royalty than to any other form of government; and in that view it had always appeared expedient to ministers to hold out the idea of encouraging and strengthening the party in the interior of France, who were disposed to assist in restoring monarchy. The re-establishment of monarchy in France had always been held out both in the opinion of individuals, and the public declarations of Government, to present the most effectual means of war, and the most probable hopes of peace. What indeed had been the origin of the unjust aggression upon this country, and what now precluded all security in treating, but the state of anarchy, confusion, and disorder, in which France was involved; and which could only be remedied by the return of some stable form of government? But though a monarchy would certainly be deemed preferable, he defied any one to produce a declaration on the part of ministers, that they never would treat with any government, under whatever form, that was capable of maintaining the accustomed relations of peace and amity with other countries. Lord Grenville stated, that in one sense he had no objection to adopt the declaration that had been proposed by the Noble Duke. He had no objection to it as stating a general question of peace and war, but he objected to it as a specific declaration applying to the particular occasion. Who would possibly differ from the proposition, that peace ought to be sought whenever it could be had consistently with the honour and security of the country? But the point at issue was, whether the state of the internal government formed, or ought to form, any part of our consideration, before we could be induced to



treat with any rational prospect of security? The affirmative we must decidedly admit, unless we were prepared to say, that the security in treating, depended not upon the characters of the persons with whom we should negotiate, but wholly upon the terms of the treaty. The question appeared to him of so much importance, that he thought it essential, distinctly to state what were his sentiments on the subject. The resolution of the Noble Duke was merely a general abstract proposition, which had no reference to the circumstances of the time, and upon which it was impossible to act. The amendment that he should move would, he said, be as follows :

“ That under the present circumstances, this House feels itself called upon to declare its determination firmly and steadily to support his Majesty in the vigorous prosecution of the present just and necessary war, as affording, at this time, the only reasonable expectation of permanent security and peace to this country : And that, for the attainment of these objects, this House relies with equal confidence on his Majesty's intention to employ vigorously the force and resources of the country, in support of its essential interests ; and on the desire uniformly manifested by his Majesty, to effect a pacification on just and honourable grounds with any government in *France*, under whatever form, which shall appear capable of maintaining the accustomed relations of peace and amity with other countries.”

He had no scruple to say, that it was directly the same as that moved in the other House of Parliament, and he thought it of importance to state precisely the same words, in order to prevent any misconstruction, and that as there was an exact agreement of principle, there might likewise be the same coincidence of expression. His Lordship proceeded to support the amendment he should move by a long detail of facts that had taken place in France, by an infinite variety of pointed observations on those facts, and by stating the deductions that in his mind resulted naturally from the premises so laid down, in like manner as the Chancellor of the Exchequer had argued in support of the same amendment in the House of Commons the preceding day. The first point to which he adverted was, how far France might be disposed to treat with this country? And here he referred to all the speeches in the Convention, to all the declarations of their government, to all the changes of their parties, which bore one unvarying aspect of hostility to this country. The next point which he proceeded to examine was, what dependence could be had upon the stability of the party now in power? The moderate till, he remarked, stood between two sets of adversaries ;  
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the first, those who wished to follow up the system of moderation, and to restore the reign of order, justice, and religion; the others, those who wished to recal the sanguinary system of terror, and to establish their own authority on proscriptions, confiscations, and massacre. How little reliance was to be placed on the stability of the Republic, might appear from a circumstance which he had received by his last accounts from Paris. A debate had taken place in the Convention, the result of which was, to send to the revolutionary tribunal, in order afterwards to be sent to the guillotine (for the first was almost invariably, a few instances only excepted, the certain prelude to the latter), a man who had published a dialogue, stating a doubt whether the majority of the people of France were most inclined to a monarchy or a republic, and proposing that the question might be submitted to the Primary Assemblies for a decision. How then could it be affirmed, that the people of France were unanimous for a republic, when the point was called in question, even at the gates of the Convention, and those who dared to suggest a doubt upon the subject were likely to be punished with death?

His Lordship enlarged as he proceeded upon each of these separate points. With regard to the question how far France was disposed to make peace, or treat for it with this country, he said, it was evident from the speeches in the Convention, from their decrees and declarations, that her professions breathed the most inveterate spirit of hostility to Great Britain, and that we were selected from the mass of the allies as that power, with which she would persist in the war with unremitting malignity. Talking of a state with which it was deemed practicable to make peace, "Let us," said one of their demagogues, "make peace with that power, but let us concentrate our forces for the destruction of the new Carthage; let amity be courted with other states, but let England be annihilated." In fact, it was evident from the terms of the reports and arguments produced in the Convention, that nothing could be further from their inclination at present, than a desire to sheath the sword against us; and that nothing less than the reduction of all their enemies would content the wild ambition that generated their enthusiasm and their phrenzy. With regard to moderantism, which was the object of the present rulers of France, he certainly rejoiced at any change from the system of terror that had prevailed during the reign of Robespierre, the merciless author of so much massacre of the innocent of all descriptions, without regard to sex or age. But let them recollect, it had been the invariable practice of every new set of rulers who gained the sway, to overturn the system of their predecessors, and to undo all that they had done. The mode-

rates might shortly be forced out by some faction of a different turn of mind, and the system of blood and murder be revived, with additional cruelty and horror. It could not therefore be said, that France had yet a government sufficiently stable and settled to make it safe to treat at present. Paris was still distracted by violent factions; and the difficulty with which that monster Carrier was at length convicted of his enormous crimes, for which he at last felt the victim of the guillotine, shewed that the moderates had to resist very powerful parties at present, which was a very favourable symptom of their permanency as rulers of the government.

With regard to the state of religion in France, it was but too clear, from the circumstance of a writer lately liberated from prison, who had written upon the religion of that country, and said, that the season of calamity and crimes more particularly inclined men to seek the consolations of religion; and that of all countries on the face of the globe, France was the country most interested to seek them. Possibly prompted by this, Gregoire moved for the toleration of the Christian religion. His speech received an impious answer; one of the leaders in the Convention declared, that the only fit religion for a republic, was republicanism; they passed to the order of the day; and immediately decreed the celebration of decadary festivals, a sort of Pagan feasts, by which the people were taught to deride all the ceremonies of religion and christianity; and from the benefits of the release granted to other descriptions of prisoners, the priests were still excepted.

He proceeded to prove from Cambon's Reports of the Committees of the Convention, the declining state of their resources, and the depreciation of their paper; assignats were fallen 15 per cent. lower than when they were at 75 per cent. discount; the sources of their revenue were dried up; the manufacturers of Lyons, who had once been so profitable to the state, had lately earned their bread as labourers, and by what sort of employment?—by demolishing, in conformity to the decree of the Convention, the houses of that once famous and opulent city. His Lordship said, the Noble Duke who brought forward the present motion, had acknowledged with a degree of candour and manliness which did him the highest honour, "that he would be as far as any man in the kingdom from *suing* for peace;" whereas his Lordship contended that, in his opinion, for this country, at the present moment, to offer terms of negotiation, would be little short of doing what the Noble Duke averred, and he really believed he would not do. Would not, his Lordship said, an offer of peace, at this moment, strongly seem to indicate that our finances were exhausted, and that we were no longer able to bear the burden  
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of the war? His Lordship was clearly of opinion that it would; and so far from that being the case, said, he spoke with the highest and best-founded exultation, when he averred that our resources were in a state very far preferable to those of the French. For, whatever might be said of the reports of the French Convention, by people in this country, it was extremely evident, from the words of their own Members, that agriculture was at a stand, manufactures no more, and commerce annihilated.

His Lordship then adverted to the report of Johannot, and said that, notwithstanding this report held out the resources of the French to amount to 500,000,000*l.* sterling, yet their immense expenditure had been such, during the last two years, as to keep at least an equal pace with it in magnitude; and that, therefore, the chief thing it went to prove, was, that in the course of the last eighteen months, by means of the most abominable massacres and proscriptions, they had confiscated, and seized into their hands, the enormous sum of 300,000,000*l.* sterling, over and above what they had got by driving away all the nobility, clergy, and other orders, who had in any measure or degree discountenanced their favourite and all-ruling system of plunder and devastation. This immense sum, arising from the property of thousands of innocent men they inhumanly treated, his Lordship said, was liable to the just and legal claims of heirs, executors, and administrators of the miserable wretches they cruelly robbed, scattered over almost every corner of the country. But it had been said, that the effect of the present system of moderantism, had been to throw the odium of all the former cruelties upon the faction of Robespierre, and to procure to the existing government the affection and confidence of the people. But in what were their resources stated to consist? In the immense confiscations that had taken place during the prevalence of the system of terror—confiscations not drawn from the crown-lands, the church-lands, the property of the exiled nobility, but from those who had remained in the country, and whose sole crime it was to be possessed of wealth and property. The heirs of those persons had applied to the present rulers to restore their property thus cruelly and unjustly taken; but had been peremptorily refused, and were left to pine in poverty and distress amidst those ample domains of which their fathers had once been the owners. Could those persons be supposed to be attached to the present government? He did not wish to throw any unmerited obloquy on the new system; the truth was, that it was much less violent and unjust than that which it had succeeded, and so far we were in a situation less remote from that in which we might be able to treat with a rational prospect  
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of security. Till that period arrived, which he yet conceived to be far distant, he was of opinion that a vigorous prosecution of the war was preferable to any attempt to negotiate. The moment of ill success was not that in which we ought to solicit for peace. He remarked with much satisfaction the animated manner in which the Noble Duke had declared that he should support the war, if France should demand unreasonable terms. Could she in the present moment be expected to propose any terms, which an Englishman would accept, or a Member of that House advise to be adopted? If we should make peace from a sense of present pressure, the injury must be great, and the indignity strong, which would again rouse us to resentment. But could we make peace with any sense of confidence or feeling of security? If in such circumstances we should treat, we should experience all the difficulties of war, and enjoy none of the advantages of peace. Were we prepared to risk the consequences of being again inundated by French missionaries and French principles? From the whole view of the situation of both countries, he thought no alternative preferable to that of a vigorous and steady prosecution of the war. He was aware that it might be deemed an unpleasant choice by many, whose impatience made them forget our situation, and that of France, relatively considered, and that a peace without security would only be a delusive and dangerous repose from war. His Lordship concluded a masterly speech, unequalled perhaps for the accuracy of its detail and the perspicuous manner in which frequent reference was had to documents, without disturbing the clear stream of argument, with desiring some extracts from the speeches of his Majesty, and the answers of that House, to be read by the clerk. The same having being read, his Lordship formally moved the resolution, which he had stated at the commencement of his speech.

*The Duke of Norfolk* rose to offer a few observations that occurred to his mind, in consequence of the conduct which the Noble Secretary of State had thought proper to pursue. When he came to the House the Duke declared he expected to have heard a single motion debated, he meant that brought forward by the Noble Duke, and he expected also that it would have been fairly met, candidly argued, and finally disposed of, either by a fair adoption or direct negative, or else by the usual mode of the previous question. The motion thus brought forward by the Noble Duke, his Grace said, he believed had for its sole object, to do away that bar which seemed to be laid in the way of peace by a certain part of the speech delivered by his Majesty to both Houses of Parliament, on the  
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first day of the present session, which conveyed an idea that no peace could be entered into with the present government of France. If this motion of the Noble Duke was to pass, a serious and weighty impediment to a negotiation for peace would be removed. On the other hand the amendment, as it was termed, appeared to him to be a very uncandid way of substituting another motion by way of getting rid of the first, and in some measure to preclude any matter of that importance from being discussed and decided upon, if it came from any other quarter than ministers themselves: For these reasons, his Grace said, he should give his strenuous support to the original motion, at the same time he must take the liberty of submitting to the House a few animadversions on some of the arguments urged by the Noble Lord who opposed it.

A great part of the Noble Lord's speech, the Duke said, had consisted of declamation and invective against the Convention and present rulers of France. In order to excite the passions of their Lordships and irritate their feelings, he had stated, in proof, as he considered it, of their total disregard of freedom, of political sentiment, and of justice, that a person had recently published a pamphlet, in the form of a dialogue, upon the question stated as the subject of controversy, "Whether the opinion of the majority of the French people was in favour of a monarchical or a republican form of government?" Which question, the author thought, under the present circumstances of France, ought to be referred to the consideration and decision of the Primary Assemblies: And this publication, his Lordship had said, so far excited the indignation and provoked the vengeance of the Convention, that they decreed that the author and publisher should be immediately arrested and carried before the revolutionary tribunal. In this proceeding, on which the Noble Secretary of State laid so much emphasis, and seemed anxious to hold it out as an object of abhorrence, his Grace said, he saw nothing extraordinary. The author had been rash enough to offend against the laws of his country, and being amenable to them in common with every other subject of France, he must necessarily abide their justice. But he would bring the case home to their Lordships, and suppose that, during the rebellion in 1745, any writer had chosen to print a dialogue on the question, whether the King should be sent back to Hanover, and that the descendant of the abdicated and exiled prince of the Stuart line, should be reinstated upon the throne of his ancestors? would not such an author have been instantly apprehended and tried for high treason for having offended the laws of his country? Or to bring the matter more immediately close to the present times, suppose that

that any man were now to write a dialogue, to moot the point, whether it would be most advisable to preserve the present form of government, of a limited monarchy, or to destroy the settled constitutional establishment of King, Lords, and Commons, and introduce the principles and form of the republican government of France; and to suggest the propriety of submitting such a question to the consideration of county meetings; would not that man be warrantably dragged to justice? There was therefore no cause for either indignation or surprise, at what the Noble Secretary of State had mentioned in terms of so much warmth and reproach. An individual had propagated doctrines dangerous to the existing government; and the existing government, on a principle of self-defence, had proceeded to punish the individual.

With regard to the amendment, he considered it to be dangerous and equivocal, while its effect with relation to this country would be nugatory. It intimated that Great Britain would not treat with France under her present form of government, although it professed to disregard what form of government she assumed, and while it presented an ambiguous meaning, might be made use of in France by those, whose interest it was to continue the war, as a pretext for their purpose; and thus they might inflame and irritate the people of that country who panted for peace, against Great Britain, and render negotiation still more difficult and distant: It might also deluge France again with blood, and lay the ground for a new scene of massacre and cruelty of every description. These were considerations for their Lordships judgment and humanity to decide upon; he submitted them therefore, as considerations naturally resulting from the terms and tendency of the amendment; whereas the original motion, being simple in its expressions and clear and explicit in its meaning, could not be mistaken, and was not likely to produce any such serious and unfortunate consequences. It was obviously calculated to open a door to negotiation, and to make a treaty for peace, whenever the fit moment should arrive for its commencement, easy and practicable. His Grace observed on the inconsistency and extraordinary conduct that his Majesty's ministers had pursued with respect to France on the particular subject of her form of government. When France, subsequent to the subversion of the old despotism, had set up a new constitution on the principles of a limited monarchy, she was attacked by foreign enemies on that ground solely, who avowedly aimed at the destruction of the new constitution: Great Britain then stood by, a passive spectator of the conflict; but when France attacked the Republic of the United Provinces, and invaded  
Holland,

Holland, we flew to the aid of that republic, and have ever since been waging war against France, because she chose to become a republic herself. So far had we carried this inconsistent principle, and such strange arguments had been set up in its justification, that he should not at all wonder if the Members of the Convention were to be at some pains to propagate the idea in France, that the King of England was obstinately bent on overturning their government if he possibly could—an idea that could not fail to lend new zeal to their enthusiasm, and give additional energy to their exertions. In every point of view, therefore, the Duke said, the original motion appeared to him to be preferable to the amendment; the one might produce the most salutary effects, the other could only increase the present obstacles to negotiation, and for these reasons he should vote for the former.

*The Earl of Darnley* rose as soon as the Duke sat down, and said he wished to offer his sentiments to their Lordships, as he differed entirely with the two Noble Dukes both as to their arguments and their conclusions; it would however be unnecessary for him to trespass long upon their Lordships time by entering much at large on the topics, that naturally presented themselves to his mind, and influenced him to decide in favour of the amendment. The Noble Secretary of State had gone into the subject so deeply, and discussed every part of it so ably, and in his mind so unanswerably, that there remained but little ground for further observation, to shew that the circumstances of the present times did not require that such a proposition as the Noble Duke had brought forward, should now be stated and adopted. Two short questions, in his opinion, his Lordship said, would serve to overturn all the arguments that had been advanced in support of the motion: And those questions, although they had been repeatedly put, could not, he believed, easily be answered. The questions were, 1st, "With whom should they treat?" And if that could be solved, the second was, "Who would treat with them?" His Lordship went into a discussion of the merits of the amendment, which he contended did not assert that it would be wise for the country to express with whom they would treat under the present circumstances of the war. He openly declared, that any specific form of government in France was not the object of the war on our part, that we should be ready to make peace, as soon as it could be made consistent with the honour, the interest, and the security of Great Britain. His Lordship declared he considered the principles practised by the present rulers of France, rather as the temporary, capricious, and uncertain expedients of the moment, adopted in times when tyranny and anarchy prevailed,



than as the principles of any settled system of government, which promised permanency and was to be depended upon. He pointed out therefore the extreme danger of negotiating with such rulers, and strenuously defended the line of conduct which ministers had adopted, on which he reasoned for some time, and then concluded with declaring that he should vote for the amendment.

*The Bishop of Landaff* (Dr. Watson) said, that from the tiredness of his life and the avocations of his duty, he rarely took occasion to trouble their Lordships, and to occupy the valuable time of the House; at a period however, so awful as the present, he could not refrain from soliciting their Lordships attention, and submitting to the House his sentiments; sentiments dictated by no nice considerations of policy, nor by any near acquaintance with the events which had recently happened. His Lordship declared that he was induced to do this, not merely by his concern for the past, but by his fear also for the future. One of the greatest political terrors that had ever operated upon his mind was perhaps about to be realized: Holland was in the possession of the French; the marine of that country might ere long be joined to that of France, and thus might an immense accession of strength and power accrue to that already too powerful republic.—With respect to war itself, his Lordship said, he was aware that war was not directly prohibited by the principles of either natural or revealed religion; he claimed some acquaintance with the sacred writings, and although he found that war was not positively prohibited, yet few were the wars which could be conscientiously described as allowable. God had, indeed, commissioned the Israelites to destroy the people of Canaan for their idolatry and abominations; but in the case of the present war, it did not appear that the combined powers had been so commissioned to extirpate the people of France.

With respect to the war in which this country was at present engaged, it had been said that it was "*just and necessary.*" On the subject of the propriety of going to war at all, there existed different opinions; for his own part, he was averse to war in general, and thought that there could be few, very few, reasons for engaging in hostilities. As to the war being just and necessary, that observation contained two propositions of a distinct nature: It was one question, whether the war be just, and another, whether it be necessary; a war might be just, and yet not be necessary, though undoubtedly no war could be necessary which was not just. Antecedent to the commencement of war, every expedient, he contended, should be tried, to continue the good understanding that might have hitherto subsisted;

sisted; peace should be asked and refused, and means of continuing friendship should be again tried; for no war could be just, unless its object was indemnification for the past, and security for the future. Whether such means had been tried with France, and tried in vain, he knew not: Their Lordships had been assured by the Noble Secretary of State that they had been; he thanked God for it. He meant not to impeach the conduct of the Noble Secretary, or of any set of men whatever, nor should his mind be biased by any motives but those of truth and justice. War, with respect to its justifiability, like many other matters, was that on which men would decide by their moral and religious views of the subject.

His Lordship declared, that, for his own part, he could not but be of opinion, that at the conclusion of the first campaign, when Prussia and Austria had been baffled in the exertion of their efforts against France, a glorious opportunity offered for Great Britain to have interfered, and have treated with propriety, dignity, and success. She might have stretched out her arm, and have said to France, "You must retire within your own frontiers, your acquisitions must be given up, you must abandon your system of fraternization, you must relinquish your ambitious and visionary schemes of aggrandizement; for not an acre of territory shall you possess beyond your ancient limits, not an acre more than you possessed under your monarchy; This is necessary for the tranquillity of Europe. You are at liberty to exercise the right that every country possesses of chusing for herself that system and form of government which she thinks proper; but you must cease to distract the governments of other nations, and to disturb their quiet and safety." Our government might in this manner have interposed its good offices, which doubtless would have been acceptable to all parties, and such interposition must have induced all the powers of Europe to respect this country. Whether or not such a line of conduct could have been pursued, he would not take upon himself to determine; but that it could not have been pursued, he would not place that degree of confidence in any man whatever that should induce him, on his own mere assertion, to believe.

With respect to the original grounds of the war in which Europe was involved, his Lordship observed, that they had never been clearly developed or sufficiently discussed. It had indeed been said, that, in so far as regarded Prussia and Austria, it had taken its rise in a coalition of Princes formed for the purpose of annihilating the freedom of France and of dismembering that country. That such were the fact, however, he could by no means credit; he must have evidences of greater weight

than any that had been yet afforded, before he could believe that so nefarious a project had ever existed; much less, that the King of Great Britain could have lent his *fat* to a deed so diabolical, and so strongly in violation of the principles of justice and the precepts of Christianity. He was persuaded that his Majesty entertained too great a sense of honour and too high a regard for morality to conceive such an idea, and he believed his Majesty's ministers to be incapable of advising him to pursue a plan so unjust.

It had been also stated as a ground of the war, that it had been rendered necessary, in order to stop the progress of democratical opinions. At no time, he contended, could such a plea be admitted in justification of war, nor was it wise to act upon such a principle. An unsuccessful war, his Lordship observed, strengthened those opinions which it had attempted to crush, and even a successful one did not enfeeble them: The history of the world, in fact, proved that the progress of opinion was not to be impeded by any operation of force. Opinions were superior to earthly controul; they resided in the mind of man, and defied the coarse materials of human power: Force tended but to confirm them; they were to be changed only by reason, lenity, experience, and reflection: And the governments of Europe would derive more solid strength and real safety by relaxing the exercise of severity, and ruling with mildness and affection, than by all the standing armies in the world, and all the acts of oppression that they could exercise. Upon that subject indeed, he thought the minister might have addressed his Majesty in terms which could not with propriety be used with respect to any other Monarch in the world: He might have said, "Sire, your situation is different from that of any other Sovereign. Let despots fear and tremble. You reign in the hearts and affections of your people; they regard you with affection and love; not for your personal virtues only, which they all admire, but because they know you to be an essential part of that constitution which they venerate. What cause then can your Majesty have for alarm?" This might have been said to the King of Great Britain. He knew not, his Lordship declared, whether any fear of personal safety had ever crossed the mind of his Majesty; he hoped it had not, for whatever might be the case as to other Sovereigns, a King of England had nothing to fear, but from an attempt to subvert the liberties of his people. That there might be some disaffected persons in this kingdom, he would not deny; that however was an evil incident to every country, for none was without it; but the disaffected in this country were few in number, and those few were

were amenable to the laws, which were sufficiently strong to punish all who violated them. The great majority of the people were in favour of his Majesty's government, and strongly attached to his person.

With respect to the constitution of this country, his Lordship declared, that no fear of any disposition in the people to change it had ever existed in his mind; nor did he think that any such wish could ever gain ground in the opinion of the Public. We revered Magna Charta, that foundation of the liberties of Englishmen; we revered the Bill of Rights, which confirmed and secured those liberties; we revered our *Habeas Corpus Act*, that protector of the freedom of the subject; an Act, the suspension of which nothing could justify except a case of extreme necessity. The equality of our laws, by which the meanest peasant was, in point of protection, raised to a level with any one of their Lordships, the freedom of the press, the provision for the poor, and the other numerous legal provisions which we had for our security, were sufficient to make us love the constitution, without the necessity of foreign wars to prevent us from subverting it. No; he would not say that a foreign war, or any thing like it, was necessary to make Englishmen love the constitution of their country; for if he did, he should grossly calumniate them. They loved their King, respected that aristocracy that was so well calculated to restrain the encroachments of the Crown on the one hand, and those of popular power on the other; and they esteemed that democracy that formed their immediate representation. "Ask the people of England" said his Lordship. "whether they wish to exchange their trial by jury, their sessions and assizes, for revolutionary tribunals; their Houses of Parliament for Committees of Public Safety and General Welfare; and their beloved Monarch for a Robespierre!" He was happy also to observe that in this country religion was respected, which was another reason to induce their Lordships to trust that there was a good prospect of the stability of our government; for they might as well attempt to erect a city without a foundation, as to construct a state without religion. For these reasons he was of opinion that no danger was to be feared from the introduction into this country of those who were wedded to what was called the Jacobin system of France; none of them could persuade Englishmen of the superiority of that system over the solid advantages that were derived from the British constitution.

He was well aware, his Lordship said, that there were some people who thought that this country ought to continue the prosecution of the war until some event favourable to our cause should

should take place in France: For his part, he could not acquiesce in any such idea; he could see no reason why the wealth of the country should be employed in that way; the most beneficial purposes to which we could direct the national wealth and strength was to husband them for our defence, and to leave France to take care of itself. We need not fear the effects of the democracy of France, nor be alarmed for the safety of our constitution, because their form of government was republican. Was it, he would ask their Lordships, the term Republic of which they were to be afraid? What was there so fascinating in a republican form of government as to make people so very fond of it? What did they see in the ancient republics to excite their admiration and envy? Even that of Athens, which had been said to have been the best, and which was indeed a prototype of that of France, was but the exercise of tyranny and oppression by the few over the many; nay, it was cruel and unjust, even to Aristides. A constitution founded indeed on the principles of the rights of man and equality, or that of America, might indeed be held out to the people of England as objects of their imitation: The good sense, however, of the people would immediately suggest to them this consideration—that the first had yet produced little to form a title to their favour, and that both of them had a strong objection to be combated, namely, that they were *new*; that novelty rendered them suspicious. “When they shall have lasted for a century,” they might say, “and shall have produced a greater sum of happiness than we have enjoyed for the same period under our form of government, then it will be time for our posterity to think of changing; in the mean time, let us preserve and improve the British constitution.” With respect to the British constitution, his Lordship declared, he was not one of those who thought that its abuses required no correction, or admitted no remedy; that we must bear the evils which we felt, and that those evils should be permitted to grow, until they formed an imposthume, the bursting of which would be tremendous and perhaps fatal. The British constitution admitted of improvement; it admitted of it, in his opinion, not only with safety, but even with advantage.

It had been urged, as another reason for continuing the war, that unless we accomplished the destruction of the present government of France, the constitution of this country must fall: His Lordship declared that he could not trace any connexion of cause and effect between them. He could not conceive that France being a republic, our government must necessarily be republican also. With respect to that country,  
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it was his opinion, that, after a variety of internal convulsions, France would return to monarchy; a monarchy, however, limited, like that of Great Britain. But whatever might be the form of government that France might think proper to adopt, that was a circumstance that could no way affect our constitution.—Such, his Lordship said, were his opinions upon the subject; had they been wavering, he should have silenced and suppressed them, and the House and the country should never have heard or known them: They were, however, the result of mature thought and firm conviction. Such, therefore, being his sentiments, he could not but regard the motion of the Noble Duke in a very favourable point of view. He was for removing any obstacle to an immediate peace; at the same time, however, he was far from contending that we should slacken in our preparations for war. On the contrary, at the same moment that we were seeking peace, he would have our preparations for war vigorous and formidable; in that, also, he thought our strength would be best exerted by sea. To the French we should extend an arm, fully armed: We should say to them, “Here are war and peace for you; take your choice! We wish for peace, and that chiefly for your sakes, to heal your distractions, and to restore tranquillity to your harassed country. If you reject the offers we make you, know, to your mortification and dismay, that you have not, as you hoped to have, a divided nation to contend with, but the force of an united people justly irritated against you. You build upon our divisions; but know that we *all* continue to support the Throne, the Aristocracy, and the People—that the Throne will protect the Aristocracy, the Aristocracy the People, and the People themselves, from the machinations of their own demagogues, and from the sanguine scenes of French fraternization.”

Negotiation, his Lordship said, was now become matter of the most serious attention for their Lordships; on dispatch much depended; by delay much might be lost, and the throne of England might be shaken. If they declared a disposition to negotiate, many and immediate advantages might accrue to this country. Should the negotiation fail of success, the people of France would see the calamity in which they would be involved, and act towards their ambitious and oppressive rulers accordingly: Independent, however, of that consideration, it would materially tend to remove discontents at home; the people of this country would perceive that the hardships under which they laboured were inevitable, and therefore would bear the burdens that might be necessary with patience and cheerfulness. By some, he was aware, it might be said, that,

that, in opening a way for negotiation, their Lordships would shew a want of firmness unworthy of so powerful a people; in that respect, however, firmness was out of the question. When circumstances rendered it prudent to alter their course, to persist was not firmness, but obstinacy. Much was to be lost by states entertaining a misapprehension of firmness. It was a mistaken notion of firmness, that lost them America. Let their Lordships then grow wise, and profit by past experience; let them not insist upon points which might prove so essentially injurious to them and their country. But it might be asked, "Shall those, who have been guilty of so much bloodshed, go unpunished?" To that he would answer, if they have been guilty of wicked actions, they will not go unpunished. The atrocities, indeed, committed in France, were disgraceful to human nature, but we were not the avengers. Leave them to the wisdom and justice of God; or, if any thing must be said upon the subject, let their Lordships pray to God to pardon those who were guilty.

Again, it might be observed, that the resources of the French were nearly exhausted; and therefore an opportunity offered of accomplishing the wishes of the House. He had not time to enter on questions of calculation; but, for the sake of argument, he would admit the assertion respecting the state of their finances. From another campaign, however, he saw not that any thing could be expected. Suppose, said his Lordship, that Louis the Seventeenth were that hour placed upon the throne of his ancestors; surrounded by all his nobles, bedecked with all the splendour and possessed of all the power of a French King; nay more, (which God avert!) the people crouching under the iron rod of his power—would that, he asked, be of any advantage to this country? Would that restore to us the thousands who had perished in this contest? Would it repay the millions we had expended? Would the French Monarch make us a present of an adequate number of his subjects to supply the places of those whom we had lost? Would he fill our Exchequer with money raised upon his own subjects, in order that we might be exonerated from the public burdens which we bear? Taking it for granted, therefore, that we could re-establish the throne of ancient despotism, and rebuild the Bastile, were we to look for reimbursement to the young monarch upon the throne? Would he give up the colonies of France as an indemnity? He could not do it; his subjects would never suffer such an act. As to our allies, even would they stand by and see it done? Would not the Emperor forbid it? Would not Spain protest against it?

Nay,

Nay, would not Holland, if she had a voice, cry out against the gift? "Our allies!" exclaimed his Lordship—"upon my conscience, I believe we have not one sincere friend among them all."

A charge of atheism against the present rulers of France had been brought forward as a reason for continuing the war. —Presumptuous idea! Miserable beings as we were, did we imagine that the arm of flesh was wanted to assist and enforce the will of the Almighty? The cause of religion had nothing to fear from the opinion of man. Not Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, nor all the tribe of philosophers of that description, among whom were to be included some of our own countrymen, could affect or injure the cause of Christianity. The abuse of religion had by them been mistaken for religion;—hence France, in the eagerness of her enthusiasm for reform of religious abuses, overlooked religion itself, and fell into atheism. The influence of their doctrines was but temporary; the mist of infidelity would soon be dispelled: In France future Lockes and future Newtons would arise, and Christianity would appear in a purer state than at any period since the days of the Apostles.

He was, his Lordship declared, no party man. From his collegiate education, and the retired habits of his life, he had, somehow or other, kept himself disconnected with political leaders. To him it was a matter of indifference who presided at the helm of state, provided the vessel were steered with steadiness and safety. The present pilots had his sincere respect: Sure he was, that the blessing of God would attend that man, who should make a christian offer to a free people. Such a disposition would diminish animosity abroad; it would lessen discontent at home. Firmness in measures originally wrong, could never be productive of good; a measure even originally right, might be extended till it became a wrong; for want of paying proper regard to that consideration, the people of France had broken the golden pillars of the church, and laid the throne in ruins.

His Lordship concluded a most powerful speech with declaring, that, for the reasons which he had stated, he was in favour of the Noble Duke's motion.

*Lord Hawkebury* rose to convince the Learned Prelate, that he was mistaken in his assertion that the war was begun by a combination of Princes, to take advantage of the state of France. It was not, his Lordship said, commenced by the Emperor, but had its origin in the unprovoked aggression of the French. Great Britain had not interfered with the go-



vernment of France, in any respect whatsoever ; but, on the contrary, France had interfered with our government. His Lordship went over the ground so often trodden, of the conduct of France in her attack upon Holland, her decree of the Convention on the 19th of November 1792, and her declaration of war against this country. The decree of the 19th of November 1792, was not an empty menace, it was not suffered to remain a dead letter on their journals, but they had realized it, in act and in practice, in various well-known instances. With regard to the fact that France declared war against us, it was notorious, that one of the grounds of accusation of Brissot was, that he had involved France unnecessarily in a war with Great Britain ; and it was stated as a crime of great magnitude, inasmuch that it weighed more heavily against him, than all his other alleged offences. Having placed those grounds of the war, and causes of its origin, in a clear point of view, his Lordship noticed other parts of the Learned Prelate's speech, and replied to them : He particularly insisted that ministers had at no time, from the commencement of hostilities, made the form of government of France, the principle of their objection to negotiate ; on the other hand, they had earnestly and anxiously wished that the government of France should assume some form that promised to be stable, and should be capable of restoring the tranquillity of Europe, and securing to this country the full and undisturbed enjoyment of her own constitution, her own form of government, her laws, her liberty, and her religion. Had any government that could be depended on to this effect yet been seen in France since the murder of their monarch ? on the contrary, had not all Europe witnessed a violent contention in Paris, between faction and faction ; one set of men obtaining the ascendancy, and after a short period of misrule led to the scaffold, and followed by another who soon shared the same fate, and were succeeded by a different set of men, acting upon different principles, but equally determined to maintain the system of tyranny and extortion, though by different means ? During the whole period the unfortunate people of France groaned under oppressions never heard of before. The word Liberty was preached, while the most goading despotism was practised. At once robbed of their property, and the price of provisions rising beyond the reach of the little that was suffered to remain with them, they had to encounter the double evils of poverty and famine, and during the whole time they dared not breathe a murmur of their injuries, lest loss of life should close the catalogue of their calamities. Would any man, therefore, seriously contend, that,  
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under such circumstances, this country could safely be at peace with France ? and would they even now, after due reflection, propose a negotiation with an enemy flushed with victory, and intoxicated with success ? His Lordship said, his Noble Friend's amendment did every thing that sound policy or expediency could warrant ; it disavowed any interference on the part of this country, with respect to the form of government which the French thought proper to adopt ; but it stated, and in his opinion wisely stated, the determination of Great Britain to prosecute the war with vigour and energy, till the moment should arrive when she might negotiate with the prospect of effecting a pacification on just and honourable grounds, with any government in France, under whatever form, which shall appear capable of maintaining the accustomed relations of peace and amity with other countries.

*Lord Strange* (the Duke of Athol) rose, and, after some prefatory claim to the indulgence of the House, on the ground of not being in the habits of speaking in popular assemblies, declared that he had been throughout the war extremely anxious for peace, whenever it could be obtained on just and honourable grounds. No other terms, than those which promised permanence, and should be consistent with the interest, the honour, and the security of this country, ought to be listened to ; but he declared he had never seen the moment yet, when the attainment of a peace so grounded appeared to be within our grasp. Whenever the happy hour should arrive, as to put it within our reach, he trusted that ministers would not neglect it, but would take advantage of the wished-for opportunity. As matters stood at present, much as he lamented the reverses and disasters of the last campaign, he thought ministers had no option : They must persist in the war, and carry it on with every exertion of vigour and energy : and though it was, in his judgment, right to declare that the form of the French Government did not stand in the way of negotiation, it was right also to assert, that we were prepared and determined to prosecute the war with vigour, till peace could be safely and honourably treated for. His Grace said, he should therefore vote for the amendment.

*The Marquis of Lansdown* said, he did not mean to trespass long upon their Lordships time, nor did he think he should have risen to second the Noble Duke's motion, in this perilous moment, after what had recently happened, viz. the loss of Holland, which filled him with astonishment, and occupied all his thoughts and all his reflections. So sudden was that event, it was scarcely credible how little the people of England were prepared for it ; as yet, they had not sufficiently

recovered from their surprise to be aware of a thousandth part of the consequences. Holland was so fortified by nature, as to be the strongest country in all Europe.

The thing would appear incredible to him, that Holland should have become the prey of the enemy in the same campaign that ministers and their friends had talked of marching to Paris, did he did not know that ministers had a facility in acting for themselves and from their own judgment, without the least respect for Parliament, or the smallest desire to avail themselves of its deliberation and wisdom.

He wished to know what was become of the services of the King of Prussia, who had received two millions from us for protecting Holland. Bills of exchange on Franckfort, he understood, had been recently remitted to him. He wished to know also, with respect to Austria, what had been done by the Emperor. The King of Prussia had received our money, the Emperor had received our money—in God's name, why did ministers not take care that we had our money's worth for our money? If the money that had been given to the King of Prussia, for which we had not been repaid by service, had been given to Holland, it would have shewn our attachment to the Dutch as an ally, have enabled them to defend themselves, and that country might have been saved. The loss of it was of most serious importance to us; Great Britain, in consequence, was not that Great Britain it was a month ago. Nor was Europe safe. The French were in possession of Amsterdam; and it was well known that Amsterdam was the depot of all Europe. The French had bought up all the saltpetre, and they had found the magazines full of stores, full of every necessary they could wish for, which we had refused to the Dutch. How it was possible for all this to have happened, he should like to know, if circumstances would allow ministers to answer. He had heard it often said, "This was not a time for reform;"—sure he was, this was not a time for inquiry. Holland being lost, how was the war to be carried on? How were we to supply our army?—how to convey the necessary means for their support? The French were in possession of all the communications with the Rhine, and the mouths of the six navigable rivers which flow through Holland in various directions, by the means of which we had been accustomed to convey the various articles this country supplied Germany with. He did not know how ministers meant to send our money to our faithful allies; those millions which we were so eager to get rid of. The business of bills of exchange was at an end; and if it was difficult to convey our money, it would be impossible to convey any thing else: If any thing  
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could find its way, their Lordships well knew that money could do it in some shape or other. But how could we send it? By the way of Hamburgit?—It was well known that the inhabitants were against us, and favourable to the French. Besides, as the French were at no great distance, they would not, from prudential motives, feel inclined to shew favour to the Combined Power. We must send our subsidy, and the money to pay our troops, in bullion.—A comfortable consideration for this country! It would amount to one-fourth of all the specie in the kingdom. Would they send it to Lubeck, or up the Oder? It would be a curious circumstance to see the King of Prussia turned broker, and metamorphosed into the character and acting the part of Mr. Hope.

The addition to the fleet of France by the capture of Holland would immediately be perhaps twenty, but sixteen sail of the line he was certain, besides a great number of frigates and smaller vessels; this would render it extremely difficult for us to protect the trade of the North Sea, and especially that of the Baltic; for they must all remember the danger the Baltic trade was in, when, in the course of the last war, our fleet was gone to the relief of Gibraltar. With these additional ships of the line, and the acknowledged skill of the French in naval architecture, they would prove an inconceivable annoyance to our Eastern coasts, and all the commerce carried on through the British Channel to the North Seas, with which our mariners were less acquainted than with any other part of the ocean. Let their Lordships also recollect the various places and different parts of the British dominions, that would call for protection from our own fleets. Against so formidable a maritime power, Ireland must be looked to with attention. The sugar islands we seemed to disregard. The East Indies would require a strong fleet; Halifax and Canada another; and there was hardly a quarter of the globe in which we should not have occasion to keep up a naval force. Thus our maritime power would necessarily be divided, in order to defend the different and distant objects that would claim our protection, which must weaken our efforts at sea considerably; while France, disregarding her foreign dominions for the present, would keep her naval force nearer home, and derive essential advantage from that circumstance.

The Marquis then turned his attention to the means of France to bear the great expence of the war, compared with the means of this country, which rendered the war important to us, not only infinitely beyond all former wars, but beyond any thing that could have been imagined by the most visionary speculatists. We had by our conduct established in France a re-  
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revolutionary government, a government which nothing could resist; which in strength, in power, and in vigorous exertion, was superior to the government of the most despotic Prince that ever existed. A despotic Prince might be restrained from harassing and oppressing his people, from motives of policy or fear; but a revolutionary government was restrained by no such considerations; the men composing which might occasionally fall, but the government itself would survive; money, men, arms, clothing, provisions—it sweeps all before it. The produce of the earth, the property of individuals, nay even their persons, must yield to requisition, and that produces a degree of energy which all the efforts of an established government can never equal. To talk, therefore, of the resources of France being nearly exhausted and her finances nearly ruined, was idle and absurd in the extreme: The Convention gave with one hand one day, what it took away with another the next; it issued paper, and retailed it at its pleasure; it was under no restraint, no controul whatever. And what had we to oppose to all this, and to rely on for the support of our enormous expences?—Nothing but a few hypocritical taxes. What was the internal situation of this country?—Distress of every kind: The poor starving; the middling class unable to live as they were accustomed to live; and even the rich sensibly feeling the high price of every article of life. In corroboration of the truth of this picture, the Marquis said, he had that day seen a Gentleman, a respectable magistrate and a clergyman, who had given a most deplorable account of the condition of the poor in the West of England, where he resided, and had described it with great feeling; declaring that, since the commencement of the war, the poor had been obliged to confine themselves to bread and water for subsistence, and from the coarse and bad flour of which their bread was made, as well as from the co-operation of other causes originating in extreme distress, putrid fevers had been generated, which put an end at once to the penury and existence of the wretched beings in question; and this had been the case with numbers. Startled at such an account, he had been almost inclined to discredit it, and begged the Gentleman to commit it to writing, asking him if he would, if called on, testify it at the bar of that House; when he answered, that “he would.” The Marquis produced the paper, and read its contents, which were as above stated. Nor was such a dreadful account, he said, peculiar to the West of England: In every corner and county of the kingdom, he believed, if inquiry were made, the same melancholy tales of woe might be traced. With a country almost depopulated by the recruiting for the army, manufactures and agriculture nearly

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at a stand for want of hands, were we in a condition to continue a war carried on at such an enormous expence of men and money, and already attended with disasters, that must lead to ruin, if the war were persisted in? Before ministers engaged the country in so mad a contest, they ought to have provided the means of carrying it on. When Henry IV. of France meditated a formidable attack on the House of Austria, he was fifteen years providing for it by forming the necessary alliances, treasuring up the public money, and enabling himself to commence it, and carry it on for six years without being under the necessity of imposing a single tax on his subjects. Had his Majesty's ministers followed that wise and prudent example?

The Marquis said, that a revolutionary government ought not to be a bar to negotiation; we had negotiated and concluded a treaty of peace with America, while under a revolutionary government, and why could not the same be done with France that had been done with America? He stated that the present perilous moment called for all the counsel, all the advice, that could be collected from the ability and experience of every man, who had studied politics, and was conversant with state affairs; he lamented therefore, that the ancient practice of summoning all the Privy Councillors together, as well those out of administration and out of office, as those that were in, when the circumstances of the kingdom were in extreme difficulty, which formerly obtained, had grown into disuse. Had such a practice prevailed at present, his Majesty could not fail to have heard the truth, and been undeceived as to the delusions played off upon him and his subjects, by ministers who either did not understand the interests of the country, or those of his Majesty and his family, or who would not for some purpose or other adopt the line of conduct that those interests rendered requisite.

Peace, the Marquis observed, must be an object desired most ardently by all the rational part of his Majesty's subjects; to what end then deal in provoking language, and apply harsh and irritating epithets to the French Convention, and its members, which could only generate ill-humour, and excite detestation? He wished for peace most anxiously, but a peace on honourable terms; to obtain which, depended in his opinion on us; we ought to offer it, and to change our tone. Let it be remembered, that "a soft answer turneth away wrath." Persuasion and mildness would, he was satisfied, do more than menace and defiance. Peace had more than once, he said, been brought about by circumstances purely accidental, and apparently trifling. The furnishing  
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Count D'Estaing with a passport in 1762, had been generally supposed to have had some influence in smoothing the way to the peace that followed. There was a circumstance at present in our power, which we might render useful. The arrival of a lovely and illustrious Personage was expected by all ranks of people in this country with a degree of anxiety seldom evinced on any former occasion. Her journey had been first impeded by the rigour of the season, and since by the events of the war. From the known gallantry of the French, a soft word to Monsieur Pichegru might, in spite of his monkish education, warm his heart, and thaw the mountains of ice that obstructed the journey of this welcome stranger, and she might come here the harbinger of peace, attended with *Cornu Copias*, and all the emblems of returning plenty. [*This exciting a general smile,*] the Marquis declared, he did not say this as a pleasantry; he was too old to pretend to be a man of gallantry, but he was naturally drawn into the manner, by the recollection of the satisfactory feelings with which the arrival of the Princess of Brunswick would fill the breast of every Englishman, whose bosom glowed with loyalty and affection to his Sovereign, and love and regard for his family. He apologised for having for a moment been betrayed into what might be deemed a levity. when God knew, there was sufficient occasion for seriousness. A speedy peace he was convinced could alone preserve the honour, the interest, and the security of this kingdom; therefore, he should give his vote for the motion of the Noble Duke.

Earl Spencer rose immediately, and said, that although he must admit much of the statement of the Noble Marquis, in respect to the condition of the country and the necessary application of our naval force, he could not admit the whole, much less the conclusions which the Noble Marquis had drawn from the premises laid down by himself, and described in such strong colours. That the war had its effect on the internal state of the country, on its agriculture and its manufactures, was undoubtedly true; but that was the unavoidable case of all wars, and perhaps to a less degree in the present than in any preceding one. Our naval exertions had been great, and he hoped that the preparations that were now making would enable us to convince all Europe, that Great Britain had not lost her energy, when she felt it necessary to maintain her rank as a maritime power. Our cause was a just one, our seamen brave, steady, and skilful, and their commanders properly anxious to maintain their own characters and the character and honour of their country. We had therefore reasonable ground for hope of success, notwithstanding that the present

present was confessedly a time of singular difficulty and danger. But it was not, he thought, a moment to sue for peace, and such he understood to be likely to be the construction that the Public would put upon the motion, though it might not be the *prima facie* import of the terms of it. Vigorous exertion he thought might secure an honourable peace, and preserve its interests. From the commencement of the war, he had felt, that the war was not only unavoidable, but just and necessary. He had delivered that opinion in the presence of their Lordships repeatedly, though by no means in the habits of speaking in Parliament before that period; and he had been lately called upon by his Majesty to take a part in Administration, a call, which he thought it would become him to comply with, when his Majesty condescended to make it, as it would have the appearance of approving measures in the responsibility for which he would not venture to take a share, if he declined accepting the gracious offer that he had been honoured with. All the petty insinuations as to the motives of his accepting office, he should treat with the contempt which they deserved; but he could not avoid joining the Noble Marquis in his wish that in this alarming period, men of experience in state affairs would give Government the advantage of their abilities; if ever the feelings of party ought to subside, this he thought was the moment, and he should rejoice exceedingly if the Noble Lords, with whom he had formerly acted, would join their talents in promoting the common cause of the country. He knew they had it in their power to give salutary counsel, to strengthen the minds of the people, and teach them that the critical situation of affairs called for the united exertions of the whole kingdom, without which there could not be the same prospect of success, considering what we had to oppose and to combat, as he trusted would be manifested, if the nation were known to act as one man. If those, who were capable of doing such essential service, should refuse their assistance, he still hoped that the country would shew a sufficient share of energy to defend itself. The Earl touched upon a few other topics, connected with the subject of debate, and declared that he thought the motion of the Noble Duke an abstract proposition, capable of misconstruction and misapplication, and that the amendment, in terms more guarded, and more expressive of the real determination of the country, was calculated to convey all the useful and indeed the main effect of the motion, without being liable to the same objections. He should therefore vote for the amendment moved by his Noble Friend.



*Lord Hawke* argued also in favour of the amendment, but his Lordship stood at the extreme end of the House (near the Throne); his reasoning did not therefore distinctly reach the bar. As far as we could collect the drift of his argument, it was to shew, that although the state of affairs was undoubtedly arduous and critical, it was by no means desperate. Adequate exertion and energy would be able to repel the attacks of an enemy actuated by such uncommon enthusiasm as the French had shewn themselves to be in the course of the present war; but our chief reliance must be on our force at sea, and the state, condition, and application of that force. To prove that we had no grounds for despondency on that head, his Lordship produced written statements to shew what were at different periods and at present the ships of the line, their rates, complement of men, number of guns, &c. in service; and after reading an enumerated detail of each particular, his Lordship spoke of the comparative fleets of France, as they stood, comprehending the ships the capture of Holland had put into their possession; deducing from the whole that we had nothing to fear, unless we were supine and inactive, vigour and intrepidity being so essential to success in the conflict we should doubtless have to support and maintain, that it would depend altogether on the superiority of exertion.

*The Earl of Hardwicke* observed, that notwithstanding the lateness of the hour he was anxious to state to the House the reasons that biased his judgment and decided the vote he should give upon the present question. In the course of his Parliamentary life few motions had occurred more deserving of the serious attention and consideration of their Lordships. It proceeded from a quarter highly respectable; it contained sentiments from the truth of which, considered abstractedly, no one could dissent; and in respect to which the opinion of reasonable and honourable men must have been uniformly the same, at the commencement of the war, at the period of success as well as after all the reverses and misfortunes of the last campaign upon the continent. It was however the duty of the House to consider what were likely to be the effects of the motion, and if there was a possibility of its producing any consequences injurious to the public interest at this time, to inquire what was the pressing necessity that calls for a motion under such circumstances. The effect which the motion, unaccompanied by any more explicit declaration, must necessarily have, would be to weaken the Executive Government both at home and abroad, by establishing an opinion in respect to their motives and intentions as injurious to the honour of the national councils, as Lord Hardwicke declared, it appeared to him,

him, after the most accurate investigation he had been able to make, unfounded in point of fact. It appeared from past experience and at no very remote period, that the weakening of Government in critical and arduous times must necessarily be productive of great disadvantage to the public interest; must defeat the very object we all wish to promote, by placing at a greater distance the period of negotiation, and by rendering the terms of peace more difficult and less advantageous whenever that fortunate period arrives. Such Lord Hardwicke conceived would be the effect of an abstract motion respecting peace, unaccompanied by a declaration of the opinion of Parliament on the subject of a vigorous prosecution of the war, with a view to a speedy and successful termination of it. In this view of the question it was surely incumbent upon any man who apprehends the possibility of danger from the adoption of the motion, to inquire what the necessity was that called for such a declaration at this time. "If," said Lord Hardwicke, "his Majesty's ministers had ever declared that any particular form of government which the French nation might think fit to establish could be a bar to negotiation and an obstacle to peace, or that the restoration of monarchical government under any form, was a *sine quâ non* of treaty, I should think it highly necessary for Parliament to interfere, and contradict in the strongest and most ample manner an opinion at once so absurd and impolitic, and not less injurious to the honour than to the interest of the country." Lord Hardwicke said, he did not allude to the simple declarations of individuals, however respectable from abilities or situation. Some might have thought that the restoration of monarchy in France in any mode, might be more for the interest of Great Britain than any other form of government; and such opinions might have been expressed in Parliament. This was a question of mere speculation, into which he should not enter, upon which there might be a difference of opinion, and with which we had little concern. The only point in which this country was interested was, that some government should be established in France, which possessing the confidence of the people of that country, and evincing a disposition to conduct itself on the principles hitherto received in Europe in the intercourse between one nation and another, should promise a reasonable security in any negotiation for peace.

The opinions therefore of Government ought not to be inferred from the individual sentiments even of the Members of his Majesty's Council, though none of them had ever asserted so extraordinary a proposition, as that the restoration of monarchy ought to be considered as a *sine quâ non* of treaty.

In the public acts and documents which exist upon this subject the King has uniformly disclaimed any interference in the internal affairs of France. Lord Hardwicke here referred to the Declaration issued at Toulon. It must be recollected that that place had been surrendered to the combined forces of Great Britain and Spain by the influence of a party which was desirous of restoring the constitution of 1789, as it was sometimes erroneously called, but which in fact meant the constitution of 1791, when it was completed by the Constituent Assembly. It was natural therefore that in that Declaration regard should be had to the temper of those who had placed so important a post in our hands, and that it should contain a recommendation in favour of limited monarchy supported by reasons perfectly consistent with rational liberty, and to which every honest and enlightened man might fairly subscribe. Lord Hardwicke here read the following extract from the Declaration issued at Toulon, November 20th, 1793 :

“ His Majesty ardently wishes the happiness of France, but by no means desires on that account to prescribe the form of its government. The King claims the right of taking an interest only, because the anarchy which now desolates that country threatens the tranquillity of his own subjects, and that of the other powers of Europe, whose peace and safety materially depend on the re-establishment of order in France, and of a regular system, which may hold out to them a secure ground of negotiation and friendship ; And his Majesty does not hesitate to declare that the re-establishment of monarchy in the person of Louis XVIth. and the lawful heirs of the Crown, appears to him the best mode of accomplishing these just and salutary views. This form of government has not only prevailed in France from the earliest times, but being capable of such limitations as may suit the respective circumstances of different nations, has been proved by experience to be the best adapted in great countries to unite the advantages of security and order with those of real liberty.”

Besides this Declaration, there is another of October 29th, 1793, intended to be circulated throughout Europe, and calculated to do away those reports which had been so industriously disseminated both in France and in other countries in respect to the intentions of the British government. In this Declaration, which as it had been read by the Clerk, Lord Hardwicke would not trouble the House by reading again, it is expressly stated, “ That it never was his Majesty’s wish or intention to dictate to France any particular form of government, but that he demanded with justice the establishment of a government,

vernment, capable of maintaining with other nations the accustomed relations of union and of peace; and that with such a government he should be happy to treat for the re-establishment of general tranquillity.

Lord Hardwicke observed that this Declaration, from what cause he could not pretend to say, had been kept out of sight in this country, from the day of its publication in the London Gazette; in the rest of Europe it seems to have been confined to the diplomatic Cabinets of the Courts to which it was transmitted; and as the tyranny of the government had obstructed its admission and circulation in France, it was not difficult to account for the misrepresentations that had existed upon the subject. There have lately been some instances in France of returning moderation, and though no symptoms have appeared of any such disposition in the countries which have been subdued by their arms in Flanders and upon the Rhine, yet he should be happy to find an alteration in their conduct in respect to Holland, of which, unfortunately for this country, they are now in possession. It appeared, however, from the most authentic intelligence, that their conduct in Germany was in the highest degree arbitrary, oppressive, and unjust. Lord Hardwicke said, he held in his hand a journal printed at Hamburgh in the German language, where, notwithstanding what a Noble Marquis had intimated respecting the French dispositions of that town, there exists a society of men of letters, of considerable abilities and respectable characters, who published the most informing and the most instructive political journal in Europe, and calculated, by the spirit of impartiality and moderation by which it is distinguished, to counteract the baneful influence of French opinions in Germany. Lord Hardwicke read from the last number of the Hamburgh Journal some details of the late transactions upon the Rhine:—

“ The groundless tales which are fabricated by certain Germans who are inclined to the French and their principles, concerning the justice and good conduct of that people in the countries they have recently acquired, are continually contradicted by the surest and the best intelligence. The whole district of country of Saerburg, Merzig, Mertzkirchen, Relingen, Remich, and from thence further up the Rhine, is entirely destroyed and laid waste. At Coblenz the burghers collected large sums of money, but if they had brought together three times as much as they possessed, it would have been insufficient to pay the exorbitant contribution that was imposed upon that town. In the mean time the French held in such contempt their fraudulent paper money, that they would not receive it  
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he wished for an early negotiation for peace, or a vigorous prosecution of the war, might join in voting for it. The motion was so framed as to concentrate all the varieties of sentiment on the subject, and to leave out of the question all matters that had afforded grounds of controversy and difference of opinion. Ministers had affected to argue, that the proposition of the Noble Duke might tend to cripple their future proceedings, by shewing a premature anxiety for peace, and an earnestness and impatience at all hazards to get rid of the war immediately. He confessed, that if such would be its effect, it ought to be guarded against; but in his mind, the conduct of ministers on this occasion was infinitely more likely to produce such an effect, than if they had met the question fairly and openly. Their evading it in the way which they had adopted, proved that they no longer stood on the high ground on which they were a short time ago, and that they were forced to make use of this expedient. That the public mind was generally changed, the Marquis said, he had the personal means of knowing; he had not been inattentive to the impression which recent events had made upon them; and he was persuaded, that from the universal spirit of loyalty and determination to stand by the King and constitution, there was but one drawback, namely, the gloom and uneasiness which hung over them at seeing no end to a war, the object of which was undefined. The motion of the Noble Duke would serve to dissipate this doubt, and would reunite all mens minds to the pursuit of the war, if after such a declaration the French were disinclined to treat for an honourable peace.

After arguing the various points he had touched on with great perspicuity and force, the Marquis recurred to what he had set out with, and said, the proposition of the Noble Duke, though an abstract proposition, could not be termed an uncalled-for abstract proposition, nor an unnecessary one; to meet it therefore with such an amendment was, in his opinion, to get rid of it in a manner contemptuous to the Noble Mover, whose rank in point of character and consideration, whose weight in the scale of property, whose known respectability both at home and abroad, entitled him to be treated with something more like respect and attention. The plain inference from such conduct was, that ministers were determined that no motion which did not originate with themselves should pass—a species of conduct which at once marked the presumption of those in office, and tended to deprive the country of the advantage of the abilities, the good sense, and deliberative wisdom of other men, who had a first-rate interest in

in the public welfare, and whose sentiments, for a variety of reasons, highly incited the serious attention of Parliament.

*Lord Mulgrave* expressed himself anxious to engage their Lordships' attention immediately on the conclusion of his Noble Friend (Lord Abercorn's) speech, as well from his respect for that House, and his sense of their Lordships' dignity and independence, as from his personal desire of retaining that place in his Noble Friend's good opinion, which he flattered himself he then held. "My Noble Friend," said his Lordship, "has argued the question with great ability, and professes himself so fully convinced of the undeniable truth and propriety of the motion brought forward by the Noble Duke, that he does not conceive it possible for any one conscientiously to give his negative to it, or even put off his direct assent by adopting the amendment, the adoption of which he should consider as a servile obedience to the dictates of the minister, and a dereliction of the free agency of unconnected individuals in that House." Highly as his Lordship estimated the abilities of his Noble Friend, he said, he could not help thinking that it was infinitely more probable that the majority of that House should differ from the judgment and conviction of his Noble Friend's mind, than that they should blindly obey the dictates, or implicitly follow the suggestions, of any man or set of men: Had his Noble Friend substituted the term of House for that of Minister, his Lordship said, that he, for one, should have been willing to adopt the reasons suggested by his Noble Friend, as those precisely by which his vote was determined in favour of the amendment. If it had been said, "the House not thinking it proper that the question should be brought forward, they have determined that no decision should be given affirmatively or negatively upon it;" he would have, without scruple, adopted that reasoning as his motive; as, in fact, it was the reason he should have given himself, had it not been first suggested by his Noble Friend. The motion, in fact, appeared to him either improper in point of time to be brought forward, or, on the other hand, fallacious in itself, as it would lead to more than it professed. If peace was not the immediate object of the motion, if it did not go to negotiation with the present existing government of France, taken with all its circumstances and all its principles, it was then premature and impolitic—premature, because it professed an anxiety to make peace when circumstances did not admit of that event;—impolitic, because, if the French government should not refuse to treat, you would be either obliged to retract, or to treat at a time which was not favourable or convenient. But if, on the

other hand, it was intended to produce an immediate treaty, his Lordship contended, that the terms of the motion, in his view of the question, were fallacious; inasmuch as it held out the object of a safe and honourable peace, at a time when, from the nature of the present government in France, no such peace could be procured: And here, his Lordship said, he must make a distinction between forms of government, and the principles on which they acted. To no form of government, as being either a monarchy or a republic, would he at any time object as incompetent to treat with this or any other country. But the point to be considered was, whether a *safe and honourable* peace could be made with a government acting upon the principles of the existing power in France? Their fundamental and favourite principle is that of a system of liberty, grounded on the imprescriptible rights of man, and unqualified equality; not that equality which claims equal distribution of justice, equal application of laws, equal security of rights and property, equal freedom, and equal protection—but an equality, the recognition of which must involve in it an admission of the injustice and usurpation of every principle of our constitution, of every order of our society, and of all those institutions which have for ages been considered as the sacred supports of our liberties, the guards of our prosperity, and the instruments of our happiness; in short, it would be to acknowledge our boasted constitution, as being at best a fortunate offspring of the violation of the imprescriptible rights of man. And will your Lordships consider that as a safe peace, which admits that people and those principles into the country, to hold clubs in every corner of the kingdom, to celebrate the civic feasts of pure democracy at the doors of this House, and to parade the guillotine along Pall Mall and St. James's?

Another favourite principle of the existing government of France, the motto to all their public acts, and the proverbial expression of the country, amongst those who have liberty of speech, is, "The republic, one and indivisible." Upon this principle of indivisibility, they have engrafted another of incorporation and adoption, by which they are equally bound not to relinquish any territory which may have been conquered from them, or to restore any possessions they may have conquered from others. "Can we then," said his Lordship, "make a safe and honourable peace on this basis, with the existing government in France? Will it, on the one hand, be a safe peace, which leaves them in possession of the Austrian Netherlands, with its immense fertility and crowded population? Will it be a safe peace, which, in addition to such an extension

extension of European territory, restores to them the West India islands, which have been stated this night to produce an annual return of ten millions sterling? Would it be safe, should they condescend to adopt and incorporate the conquered country of Holland into their republic, to leave to them the possession of the coasts, the harbours, the resources, the industry and population of that country, with all the advantages which have been so powerfully and so amply stated in another view, by the Noble Marquis (Lansdown) near me? Can we make an honourable peace, by a voluntary and unconstrained sacrifice of all those who, in the West Indies and elsewhere, have put themselves under your government, and have trusted to your protection? Can we make an honourable peace, by the sacrifice of Savoy, which we have guaranteed to the King of Sardinia, or by the surrender of Corsica to the fury and vengeance of the French, after they have solicited your adoption, and sought your sovereignty, after his Majesty has accepted the Crown of that island, and that both Houses of Parliament, in their addresses, have sanctioned, adopted, and approved that acceptance?—Are these terms either safe or honourable? Yet these terms must be adopted, or the principles of the existing government in France must be changed; and is such a change to be expected or supposed, from that victorious republic, in the hour of success and in the moment of exultation? And what (said his Lordship) is the probable permanency, the moderation and good faith, either to its subjects or to its neighbours, of this republic, at whose mercy we should place ourselves by such concessions?"

As to its permanency, we have lately seen, in July last, the overthrow of the most powerful and most permanent government which has existed in France since the revolution. During the reign of Robespierre, resources were found by the most tyrannical measure of double oppression—the forced value of assignats, and the depression of the price of labour and commodities by the law of the *maximum*; the state having provided for its necessary supply, by the limited value of property, the forced continuance of individuals in their usual labour or traffick, and by an arbitrary estimation of paper, an enormous public debt and general discontent were to be encountered on the accession of the moderates, who by a swindling policy have reduced the forced value of assignats, to their probable produce, or at least to the public estimation of it, which has reduced their value 85 per cent. At the same time, by taking off the restraints of the hateful law of the *maximum*, they have suffered the price of all the necessaries of life to become double; "and to my surprise," said his Lordship, "I hear a Noble



Duke declare, that this produces no distress in France. I have before heard the same assertion, but I have heard no argument in support of it, and I should be curious to hear what argument could be produced in support of it—put into English, and applied to ourselves. What! would it be no distress to the people of this country, if 100l. should become worth 5l. only, and that all the articles of our consumption should rise to double their price? I should doubt the permanency even of our own government under such circumstances. Such are the systems of their internal governments either of terror or moderatism.” For their moderation towards other nations, his Lordship said he need only recall to their Lordships recollection, the eternal war denounced in the reign of Robespierre against all Sovereigns, and the determination not to make peace with any nation which should have a King over it; which general declaration, it seems, the moderates have concentrated to one point, and directed against this country exclusively. To avert these dangers, and to avoid this collective vengeance, we are, it seems, to propose peace, and solicit them to treat! “Are we then (he said) so insensible to the recent and calamitous example we have seen of the effects of such solicitation to treat? Can we so soon forget that Holland did propose to treat, that commissioners were appointed, and that, under the faith of a strongly implied, if not a specifically expressed armistice, the French marched forward upon their supine negotiating prey, and over-run the country, in a torrent more dreadful and destructive than any that Meuden or Naarden could produce, and that before the Commissioners of Holland could arrive at Paris, the army of France was at Amsterdam, the guillotine was erected in their principal market-places, and on every rampart of the United Provinces the republican “banners flout the skies, and fan their people cold?”—An armistice indeed, from the happy local situation of this country and the gallant and independent spirit of its inhabitants, might not be so fatal to us: We must go for our destruction one step beyond a truce, make a peace, let in the missionaries of French anarchy and infidelity, give them time to consult with their hidden associates, let them have an opportunity of imposing on the ignorant, and inflaming the eager and unwary, and they may then attack us unarmed and unallied, and perhaps effect our overthrow. At all events, under all the present circumstances, a peace would give us the infection of tranquillity without its repose; we should be disarmed without security, and at peace without amity.

“But (added his Lordship), were my opinion different respecting French principles, French moderation, and French faith,

faith, the motion would appear objectionable, from the impolicy of preliminary declarations either in the shape of gratuitous concessions, or impotent threats; in the first case, you hazard either the future sacrifice of national interests, or the dereliction of national consistency and good faith. You perhaps make concessions without any return, which might during negotiation have produced counter-concessions, or by retracting your pledge you expose yourselves to the disgraceful imputations of inconsistency and falsehood. Louis the XIVth, on his marriage with the Infanta, renounced for himself and his posterity, the succession to the Spanish monarchy; and on the death of Charles the II<sup>d</sup> he found himself in the awful dilemma of either breaking a solemn pledge made in the face of all Europe, or of sacrificing the claims of his family and the advantage of his people; he chose the first, and was in consequence harassed with the most powerful combination, and pressed by the most calamitous and destructive war of his whole reign. If we enter into an engagement to interfere in no circumstances in the internal government of France, we may bind ourselves to accept it, at a moment when it may be offered to avert an impending counter-revolution, which might be completed by our assistance given to the counter-revolutionary party, and might introduce a government most favourable to the peace and prosperity of this country. And here his Lordship desired to recall to the recollection of the Noble Lords who supported the original motion, the opinion of a great political character, from whom they were not likely to dissent or disposed to differ. When the Addressees to his Majesty in 1787, on the revolution in Holland, were unanimously voted, the person alluded to, stated, that he felt an objection to an expression, as he thought, superfluously introduced into the Address, and tending to bind those who voted for it, to a restrictive principle which he could not admit. The expression was, that the *ancient and lawful* government of Holland had been restored. It was not, he said, a question with him, whether it were the ancient and lawful government, but whether it were that government which would be most likely to be favourable to this country and advantageous to its interests. "Let me then ask (said Lord Mulgrave), whether the present existing power in France, to which we are called upon to bind ourselves, is the ancient and lawful government of France, or like any ancient or lawful government that ever existed; or whether, on the other hand, it is the government most likely to be favourable to this country or advantageous to its interests?" He would not, he said, however, declare that he never would treat even with the existing French government. It was as  
impolitic

impolitic to threaten as to concede prematurely—the chances and calamities of war might reduce us to the necessity of treating. With greater disadvantages of honour and security we never could treat. The question was, whether that necessity was yet come upon us?

*Si tam deserti fumus, et semel agmine verso*

*Funditus occidimus—neque habet Fortuna regressum.*

Let us adopt the motion and open the treaty. And this brings me (said his Lordship) to consider the statement of our situation made by the Noble Marquis near me. Had I not considered our resources as well as our reverses, had I nothing on which to form my judgment, but the melancholy picture drawn by the Noble Marquis, I should indeed think the time come for supplicating peace, and accepting any terms which might be granted. The statements of the Noble Marquis go not to the impolicy but to the impossibility of carrying on the war; it goes not to the estimation of our resources, but to the conclusion that they are at an end. Yet, if every circumstance be considered, there is room still, not only for consolation but for hope: We have, it must be admitted with sorrow (but not felt with despair), met with heavy losses and severe discomfiture; the last campaign in Europe has been peculiarly calamitous and unsuccessful; the very elements have been adverse; and a most important limb of the confederacy has been lopped off by the victorious sword of our enemy; the Austrian Netherlands have been relinquished, and Holland has been conquered;

*Non erit auxilio nobis Ætolus et Arpi,*

*At Messapus erit—et quos*

*Tot populi miseri disces—*

We may still look to the Germanic Body; the zealous co-operation of Austria may be expected with added vigour; the King of Prussia may feel the necessity of action—Spain, the States of Italy, the desperate state and gallant exertions of the French emigrants and royalists, may still be looked to, if we do not shut out all prospect of advantage from their efforts. The resources of the West India islands, the local advantages of Corsica, and a navy victorious and masters of the sea, are still ours. Let us not therefore discourage our allies, dispirit our countrymen, and alarm those who look to us for support and protection, by a premature and useless declaration,—“I should have been, for one, ready to meet the motion with a previous question; but if some declaration is thought necessary, I cannot conceive one more properly guarded than the amendment

ment proposed by my Noble Friend; for which I shall give my vote, from my opinion that it is perfectly distinct from the motion brought forward by the Noble Duke.

*The Earl of Lauderdale* began a very warm and animated argument in support of the motion of his Noble Friend, by declaring his astonishment at the manner in which it had been met by ministers that day—a motion that was so plain in itself, and so simple and explicit in its expressions, that it was wonderful how any set of men could have imagined it was proper to meet it with a recapitulation of all the hacknied topics relied on in the course of last year's debates, the fallacy of which was then detected and exposed, and had been since unanswerably disproved by the evidence of events, a sort of testimony which no man could controvert. The Earl went over the history of the negotiations with the Emperor, and what had passed at the Diet of Ratisbon. A Noble Lord in that House had been sent with two propositions to the court of Vienna, in the reception of which, that court behaved as might have been expected: The one was to offer the Emperor a loan of six millions, the other to propose that a British General should take the command of their troops. He spoke ironically of the wonderful difficulty that might have attended the part of that negotiation which related to persuading the Emperor to accept our subsidy. He said, the money offered, no doubt, was accepted with a true German bluntness and indifference; that it was considered, large as its amount was, as a mere barter of commodity, which the English, from prejudice of education, or insurmountable habit, or some other irresistible impulse, were so bent on getting rid of, that it was to be accepted as a matter of course; and the rather, as it proved a seasonable supply to the aid of their exhausted finances. But was the Emperor equally accommodable, he asked, in respect to the condition that an Austrian army should be commanded by a British General? He believed not. Those who treated on the part of the Emperor, said "We'll take your money, but the other condition is a very different question." With regard to what passed at the Diet of Ratisbon, it was, he said, matter of notoriety that the Elector of Hanover and the Prince of Hesse were the only Electors adverse to peace, that the Emperor, as Archduke of Austria, seemed rather inclined to meet the general wish of the Diet; but proposed that the decision of the matter in question should be referred to the Emperor, *viz.* to himself. The Earl took notice of the different arguments urged by different Noble Lords, and said something pointed in reply to each, in the course of his discussion, which was extremely circumstantial, as his Lordship generally speaks from  
the

the minutes, which he makes at the table, of what is said by those who have preceded him in the debate, and maintained reasonings, that do not fall in with his own opinions or wishes. He contended that the present motion spoke not only the sense of the nation, but of our allies. The only objections which were made to it were not drawn from the law of nations, but from the Jacobin school, which the speakers against it professed so much to reprobate, or from the doctrines and principles which had been avowed by the Empress of Russia. He opposed himself to the amendment, not only as being contradictory in itself, but as leaving it within the discretion of ministers to determine "when a government should be established in France, capable of maintaining the relations of peace and amity with other nations." If it was left to ministers to determine on this nice topic, it was easy to see, that with their want of success, and their wishes to retrieve the character they had lost, the period must be very distant indeed when they would discover a government in France with whom they could possibly negotiate. After coinciding in sentiment with every part of the speech of his Noble Friend, who brought forward the proposition, the Earl concluded with declaring that he should give his vote for the motion.

*The Earl of Carlisle* complimented the Noble Duke on his motion, which, upon the face of it, imported what could not be denied; but under the circumstances of the war, he felt great doubts whether it would be understood by the country, or by the French themselves, as meaning what he made no question the Noble Duke intended it to effect, *viz.* to open a door to negotiation, and smooth the path of peace. On the contrary, he greatly feared, that the construction put upon it by the people of England, would be, that if it did not directly *sue* for peace, it at least laid Great Britain at the feet of France, and put it at the mercy of the Convention—an idea, at which he was sure every man who felt for the honour of his country would revolt, not only because it was in the highest degree degrading to the national character, but because it could not but tend effectually to prevent our making either a secure or an honourable peace. Peace was undoubtedly a desirable object, but in proportion as it was desirable, he thought it indispensibly necessary, that we should take care to attempt to negotiate it, only when it could be done consistently with the honour and dignity of the country. The amendment, the Earl said, he conceived embraced the main idea of the original motion, but stated it in more guarded terms, and in terms better adapted to all the circumstances of the occasion.

*The*

The Duke of Leeds said, "My Lords, before I say a single word to the question now before you, I think some apology is necessary from me to my Noble Friend high in office (Lord Grenville), and another Noble Lord (Lord Darnley), for my having withdrawn myself from this House, previous to their having honoured my sentiments with their observations (alluding to what passed the first day of the sessions). Not having seen either the Speech or Address, and speaking merely from what I had collected during their being officially read, I am conscious the words I quoted, as forming a part of them, were inaccurate; I have since looked at them, and hold the Address now in my hand, and of course hope to be correct.

The expression, "*no established government or independent state can, under the present circumstances, derive real security from such negotiations,*" is what I must still object to, and for this reason, as conveying to my mind nothing less than a dignified term of manly resistance, but on the contrary expressing something like peevish resentment, little calculated to be conveyed from such authority to such an auditory as in the case when a Sovereign of this country speaks to a British Parliament.

"Now to the question itself. My Lords, when the Noble Duke who brought forward this motion did me the honour to communicate it to me, I confess, it met with my warmest approbation. It struck me as conveying in a very small compass, an abstract proposition, I admit, but at the same time such an abstract proposition, as the circumstances of the times, the situation of this country, and, give me leave to say, the situation of France, rendered to my judgment highly wise, politic, and advantageous, for your Lordships to adopt. I trust, my Lords, I am neither of too sanguine or too desponding a nature with regard to the real interests of this country. I know there are people who, from their language, seem to entertain ideas, which God forbid should ever enter within these walls, and who, in other respects, not only possess common sense, and exhibit very respectable abilities, but whose arguments, notwithstanding, tend to this conclusion—namely, that no peace ought to be negotiated with the republic of France, till the French army are at Shooter's Hill, or the English at *Mont Martre*.

"My Lords, my opinion by no means goes to the absurd length I have just stated to your Lordships, nor can that of any person upon reflection, I trust, extend so far. I cannot but lament, my Lords, considering the very great length to which our present debate has reached, that a profusion of very able and very brilliant argument has been unnecessarily

consumed. Had Noble Lords confined themselves to the real merits of the question now before the House, I should have trespassed upon your patience at least four hours sooner than the present moment: I therefore hope your Lordships will not accuse me of being a voluntary intruder on your time. My Lords, the present motion has been argued as if an immediate peace, or, to use the emphatic words (certainly in the present instance most notoriously misapplied), the *suing* to France for peace, was either consistent with the letter or the spirit of the Noble Duke's motion; such a construction put upon the motion I reprobate. For my own part, my Lords, I must declare that no one principle which operated upon my mind from the commencement of the war, has been, or is now abandoned by me; and had the Noble Duke's motion, either directly or indirectly, cramped any operation either naval or military, or retarded any preparation whatever of our exertions against France; I declare solemnly before God, your Lordships, and my country, I should have been a strenuous opposer of such a measure. My Lords, a Noble Marquis whom I do not now see in his place, has, I know not why, endeavoured to paint the present situation of the country as deplorable in the most pointed terms: I deny the fact, and were I to admit it, I would describe it in still more glowing colours, I would borrow the expressions of one of the greatest characters that ever existed in this country, whose memory must ever be dear to Englishmen; and who, during the American war, predicted ruin to this country—(thank God, the prediction was not verified!) That great man, addressing himself to this House, deploring the approaching destruction of the country, told their Lordships, "*When the cloud breaks on this devoted country, your Lordships will know your duty: I think I see you now encompassed round that throne, and willing to support it, still falling with your Sovereign amid the general wreck, and adding individual honour to the momentous downfall of the constitution.*"—[LORD CHATHAM.]

"In the course of the many years, my Lords, that I have sat in Parliament, I have seen the country labouring with great and threatening difficulties. During the American war, though undoubtedly supported by the great body of the people in its origin, it was at last found impossible to be carried on with any hopes of success. No blame had ever occurred from making the peace, as far as giving independence to America was a term of the pacification; and therefore, considering the language that had been held in this country towards the Congress, with whom we afterwards were obliged to treat, I certainly

tainly could not think that it was either wise or expedient to descend to such expressions as afterwards we might have reason to disavow virtually, if not directly.

“ But, my Lords, I deny the state of the country to be such as described by the Noble Marquis ; was it such, I should indeed hold any argument to be superfluous : We should then have no choice. No, my Lords, I look upon this country as possessing great and formidable resources, which, if well applied, are equal to the present and every other emergency. But, my Lords, admitting, as I do, the present times to be attended with difficulty, nay with danger, I wish to see both objects met with manly and decided firmness. Obstinacy must not be represented as firmness founded upon wisdom, nor must the frantic efforts of wild enthusiasm pass for the vigorous energy of real courage. A cool, steady, uniform, and well-concerted plan of operation on our part, will still, I trust, successfully prevail, and bring us finally to the desired port ; namely, the concluding such a peace as shall be consistent with the *interest*, the *honour*, and the *security* of this country.

“ Such, my Lords, being the fair and obvious tendency of the Noble Duke's motion, I shall give it my most hearty and unequivocal support ; and, applauding the simple terms in which it is conveyed, can have no hesitation in preferring it to the amendment moved by my Noble Friend ; the introduction of which amendment I cannot but lament, inasmuch as it appears to me specious in its first impression ; but, notwithstanding it adopts the sentiments of the original motion, so far departing from the simplicity of that motion, as rather to hold out its sentiments with a view to combat them, and in borrowing the good sense of that motion, it industriously provides for preventing the merit of that motion from proving advantageous to the country : In that, my Lords, I can only consider the amendment as tending to allure the approbation of the House under false pretences ; I therefore reprobate it, and cannot but consider it as totally unworthy the very respectable quarter from whence it originated.

The Lord Chancellor left the woofack, not, he said, to go at length into the discussion of a motion that had been so fully argued, but to call the attention of their Lordships to the true distinction and difference between the original motion and the amendment. In order to shew this, his Lordship entered into an analytical examination of the motion of the Noble Duke, and of the amendment moved by the Secretary of State. The original motion was undeniably a mere abstract proposition in itself, which could not with more propriety be entered on the Journals of the House, than any similar pro-



position with respect to morals or politics. It might be construed as the Noble Duke meant it to be construed, or it might be taken in an adverse and a very different point of view, and its effect would necessarily be productive of salutary or injurious consequences, just as it was interpreted. The Noble Duke doubtless meant to open a door to negotiation; but was he sure it would do so? As a mere abstract proposition, *cui bono* bring it forward? It was not necessary for their Lordships to select abstract propositions from the law of nations, to put them upon their Journals in the shape of resolutions of the House. The amendment appeared to him to be liable to less objection. It aimed at the same object; but in a less objectionable manner. It was calculated to attain all that the motion of the Noble Duke, in a speech of great eloquence and great ability, professed to be desirous of effecting. Take it collectively, or take it with a view to its several parts, it would be found on examination to meet every wish, that could be supposed to predominate in the mind of the Noble Duke, and in the minds of all the Noble Lords who had spoken in support of his motion. His Lordship traced the amendment through every sentence, and explained, with great perspicuity, its bearings and probable consequences. After arguing it at some length with infinite precision and minuteness, he concluded with declaring that he should vote for the amendment.

*The Earl of Guildford* rose, not to detain their Lordships, but merely to offer a single observation. The amendment did not, the Earl said, go to the same end, to answer which the motion of his Noble Friend was calculated. The motion intended to open a door to negotiation, without reserve or exception. The amendment in the latter part of it expressly made an exception to the present government of France, by the obvious meaning of the words "and on the desire, uniformly manifested by his Majesty, to effect a pacification on just and honourable grounds *with any government in France, under whatever form, which shall appear capable of maintaining the accustomed relations of peace and amity with other countries.*"

*Lord Auckland* said, that in a crisis so awful, and when difficulties and dangers were accumulating against us beyond all example of former wars, he had watched the debate with extreme anxiety, as involving considerations of high importance to the essential interests, and perhaps to the existence, of the British empire. The question of the Noble Duke purported to be a step on our part towards a pacification; the amendment of his Noble Friend professed to have the same object; and, in addition to it, to urge upon the country the necessity of advancing

cirrig towards that object with honour, safety, and advantage, which can only be done by an increased activity and exertion in the war. Called upon as he now was to decide between the motion and such an amendment, he could not hesitate to give his preference to the latter for reasons which had been so fully stated by others, that it was superfluous to repeat them. He must however confess that he had felt great doubts, whether a motion might not have been pressed in a manner better calculated to answer every possible good purpose. With that view, he would have taken only that part of the Noble Lord's amendment which relates to the prosecution and object of the war: He would have added to it the comprehensive words of the Noble Duke respecting the government to be treated with; to which he would have subjoined the closing sentence of the amendment moved on the 12th of February 1793, in the two Houses (by Lord Lauderdale and Mr. Fox). The motion would then have been as follows:

"That under the present circumstances, this House feels itself called upon to declare its determination firmly and steadily to support his Majesty, in the vigorous prosecution of a just and necessary war, as affording, at this time, the only reasonable expectation of permanent security and peace to this country: And that, for the attainment of these objects, this House relies with confidence on his Majesty's intention to employ vigorously the force and resources of the country, in support of its essential interests."—  
 "And that, whatever may be the form of government which may at any time prevail in *France*, it ought not to preclude negotiation or prevent peace, on such terms as may be consistent with the honour of his Majesty's Crown, the security of his Allies, and the interests of his people."

Lord Auckland proceeded to remark, that the motion thus stated would have been more consonant to his feelings, than the words at the close of his Noble Friend's amendment, in which there was a latent, certainly not a studied, ambiguity. He would not, however, propose his own words, because he was unwilling to lengthen the debate, and still more to embarrass any measure that might be thought necessary by those who had the arduous task of conducting the present war. The wording of the motion which he had stated would serve to shew the construction which he would be understood to give to the amendment that he was about to vote.

Their Lordships, the *Bishop of Durham* said, need be under no apprehensions from seeing him rise at so very late an hour\*, that he would trespass on their patience, or detain them long

\* Three o'clock in the morning.

and showed that no solid objection had been brought against his original motion.

The Duke particularly took notice of the propensity of ministers to shift their ground; if he ascribed to them one line of argument, they immediately said, No; and had recourse to some other position: If he attempted to fix them to that, they again shifted their ground, and sheltered themselves under some fresh subterfuge. The same unfair mode which they employed in defending themselves, they had applied to the proposition which he had brought forward on that occasion. Instead of frankly meeting it, the Noble Secretary of State had chosen to set it aside, by bringing forward an entirely different resolution, under colour of an amendment;—a circumstance which clearly proved, that no proposition would be adopted by ministers, which did not, in the first instance, proceed from themselves. This was a mode of getting rid of his resolution, which he must distinctly reprobate. They had then argued against his resolution, as if it went to the length of suing for peace; a circumstance which he had not only expressly disclaimed, but which the proposition itself could not in the smallest degree warrant. On the contrary, he had brought it forward, in order to lead ministers to some direct avowal of principle, which might at least pave the way for negotiation, and hold out a ground to the country, on which it might be possible to treat. The Noble Secretary of State had stated it as a proof of the instability of the republican government of France, that the Convention had sent to the revolutionary tribunal, a person who had published a pamphlet proposing, that the Primary Assemblies should meet to deliberate whether monarchy should not be restored. This was the greatest crime that could be committed against any state, as it was a proposal that went directly to overturn the existing republican government. Was it any proof of the instability of the British Constitution, that Government had thought proper to hang their own spy (Watt), because, in order the more effectually to promote the views of his employers, he had thought proper in the societies to espouse the cause of republicanism? What would ministers say, if the expression of this spy had been held out as the criterion of the sentiments of the country. The Learned Lord on the Woolstack had been pleased to declare, that he imputed to him no bad intention in bringing forward his motion. What intention could the Noble Lord possibly impute to him; but regard for the interests of the country, and a desire to save the constitution? But it might be alleged that they opposed the measures of ministers because they were envious of their places. The ranks of Opposition had lately been considerably

siderably thinned ; other Noble Lords had changed their opinions, and had been rewarded with places and honour :—  
 “ We, too (said the Duke of Bedford), might have participated of these rewards, if we had been disposed to purchase them at the same price.”

*Lord Grenville, Lord Mulgrave, and Lord Carlisle* said a few words in explanation.

The House divided on the amendment :

<i>Contents</i>	-	-	-	88
<i>Not-Contents</i>	-	-	-	15
				<hr/>
			<i>Majority</i>	73

The question being put on the motion thus amended, a conversation took place, in which *Lord Grenville* is rumoured to have said expressly, that his Majesty's ministers considered the present government of France as one with which they could not treat.

*The Duke of Bedford* and *the Earls of Guildford* and *Lauderdale* contended, that this was a full admission that the resolution, as now proposed to be voted, was completely nugatory.

*Lord Grenville* and *the Earl of Carlisle* endeavoured to qualify this construction of *Lord Grenville's* words, but the words in substance were adhered to.

The amended motion was carried without a division.

Adjourned at half an hour past four o'clock.

The Marquis of Lansdown, Bishop of Landaff, and Earl of Tankerville, went away before the division.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS.

WEDNESDAY, Jan. 28.

The Mutiny Bill was presented and read a first time.

*The Speaker* issued a new writ for the election of a Member of Parliament for the town of Carnarvon, in the county of Carnarvon, in the room of Lord Paget, appointed Lord Lieutenant of the county.

*Mr. Hussey* moved, That an account of the national debt, as it stood on the 5th of January, should be laid upon the table, with an account of the interest thereon.

## MANNING THE NAVY.

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, he had some time since given notice of his intention to move for a Committee, to

take into consideration a plan for the more speedily and effectually manning his Majesty's navy. This motion he meant to bring forward on Monday next; but would, for the present, present an outline of the plan, which he meant on Monday to submit for discussion.

The first proposition which he intended to make was, that a supply of seamen should be furnished from the different merchant-ships, previous to their clearing out, in proportion to their tonnage; so that while a sufficient number of men should be left to navigate the ships, there might likewise be a force adequate to the protection of the convoys. On this subject he had already had much communication with mercantile men, and would be glad to receive further information.

The second proposition was, that as there was a great number of men employed on water in different parts of the kingdom, who, from the nature of their employment, were qualified for sea service, though not regularly trained to be seamen, that out of these there should also be furnished a certain proportion.

It was further conceived, that a considerable number of landmen might be applied to the naval service. With this view it was proposed to make a call upon the different counties to furnish a certain number of landmen in proportion to the number of inhabited houses, not exempted from taxes. The mode of raising these men was to be left to the magistrates, with this provision, that there should be imposed upon every parish, in case of default, a fine to such an amount as would exceed the bounty which it might be necessary to offer.

These were certainly strong measures; but the situation of the country required that strong and effectual measures should be taken; and from the sentiments that had been expressed from all sides, he had reason to believe that they were such as would meet with general concurrence. He concluded with moving, that the subject should be taken into consideration in a Committee on Monday.

*Mr. Grey* said, the matter proposed by the Right Hon. Member was certainly an object of the highest importance to the country; and where its safety was concerned, every person should concur in measures productive of that end. It was necessary, however, not only to get as many men from the number of those already trained to service, but to protect the nursery of seamen. He stated, that he understood there existed two obstacles to this nursery; first, the circumstance of impressing apprentices, which deterred young men from entering into the service; and secondly, the high bounties given in sea-port towns, by the recruiting parties.

*Mr.*

*Mr. Jekyll* asked what period of notice was to be given to the merchant-ships to furnish their quota of men, that it might not operate as an embargo.

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that it was intended to operate as the most effectual embargo, and the object of the Committee was, to consider the best means in which that embargo could be applied; the operation would affect every ship as soon as the Act had passed.

#### MOTION FOR PEACE.

*Mr. Grey* said, that in consequence of the event of his motion on Monday, so unsatisfactory to him, and, he understood, as little satisfactory to the Public, at a period the most important and pressing that had ever occurred in the annals of the country, he rose to give notice of his intention to bring forward a similar motion on a future day, in order to ascertain the principle on which the war was still persisted to be carried on—a point which he had by no means been able to collect from any thing expressed in the amendment moved by the Right Hon. Gentleman on the former evening. He should take an opportunity to give further notice of this motion on Monday.

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* stated, that on Monday he expected to be authorised by his Majesty to bring down a message respecting the Austrian loan, which would of course be taken into consideration the day following.

*Mr. Hussy* observed, that this was a measure not only new and unprecedented, but on the consequences of which depended the public credit; before, therefore, the House should consent to give away such a sum for foreign service, it was important that they should be in possession of every information that could be obtained with respect to the effects of such a step in the present state of affairs. He should therefore make a motion, "That the Governor and Deputy Governor of the Bank of England be moved for to attend this House, in order to state their information on this measure."

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* objected to this motion as irregular in the present stage of the business; and gave notice of his intention afterwards to oppose it.

*The Speaker* stated, that, consistently with the forms of the House, what had been said by the Hon. Gentleman could be considered only as an intimation of a future motion.

#### SUSPENSION OF THE HABEAS CORPUS.

The Order of the Day being read for the House to resolve itself into a Committee, &c.

*The Attorney General* moved, That the Speaker do now leave the chair.

*Mr. Fox* said, that having on a former night given notice of his intention to oppose the House going into a Committee on this Bill, though he meant to object to the Speaker leaving the chair, it was not on the ground of moving for a Call of the House. There was nothing asserted in the preamble of the Bill which had any reference to the law of treason. He would not pledge himself to the measure of bringing in a declaratory Act to explain the law of treason. But if in the late trials doubts and constructions had been attempted to be introduced upon the statute of Edward III. which was in his mind the most simple and explicit upon the statute-book, it was of importance that these should be done away, and that the statute should be put upon the footing of clearness and precision, for which it had originally been introduced. He meant to oppose the motion for leaving the chair, on the general grounds which had already been stated, and which he should not then recapitulate. It had been said, that in suspending the *Habeas Corpus* we only imitated the example of our fathers; the *Habeas Corpus* had indeed been suspended, but the continuance of that suspension, after the period for which it had originally been fixed, was rare indeed. No such further suspension, he believed, had ever taken place, where there had been no persons in custody. He referred to the instances in the reigns of William III. and of George I. and II. In these instances it had been suspended either during the period of rebellion, when it was of consequence to prevent any accession to the rebel force, or from the dread of attempts to assassinate the King, which from the instantaneity with which they could be executed, it was expedient and necessary to meet by means of immediate prevention, neither of which circumstances applied to the present period. He concluded, therefore, that the present measure was not more warranted by precedents, than it was by the general principles of the constitution, and the consideration of the existing circumstances.

*The Attorney General* declined entering into the general discussion, but deprecated any attempt to draw the law of treason into question.

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that for the honour of the country no case similar to the present had ever occurred. The danger, which we had at present to encounter, arose from the progress of those principles, the dreadful consequences of which we had for some years past had the misfortune to witness. Since the Revolution the *Habeas Corpus* had been twelve times

times suspended, and in three or four of these instances the suspension had been continued without bringing forward any fresh grounds, only stating the general prevalence of danger. He referred to the preamble of one of the Acts of William III. the year after the Revolution, stating, that "Whereas there were just grounds to suspect treasonable practices, &c." The only question then was, whether, because the danger at the present moment was not precisely the same, though in the minds of many rational persons it was of a nature infinitely more dreadful and alarming, we ought not to adopt the same means of precaution that were employed in those former instances.

The House divided on the question "Whether the Speaker do now leave the chair?"

<i>Ayes</i>	-	-	69
<i>Noes</i>	-	-	14

*Majority* 55

The Bill then went through the Committee, in which it was agreed that it should continue in force till the end of the session. The Report was then received, and the Bill ordered to be read a third time to-morrow.

## HOUSE OF LORDS.

THURSDAY, Jan. 29.

Received from the Commons the Bill for suspending the *Habeas Corpus* Act, which was read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time on Saturday next.

The *Earl of Guildford* said, as it was understood that a message would come to that House from his Majesty, respecting the Imperial loan, it would be necessary for the House, before it proceeded on any future subsidies, to have some information as to the effect of a former one, he meant that of the King of Prussia. He therefore moved, "That an humble Address be presented to his Majesty, praying that he would be graciously pleased to give directions, that there be laid before the House, the particulars of the treaty entered into with his Prussian Majesty, and signed at the Hague in the year 1794."—Ordered.

The Noble Earl then made a second and third motion.

The second was, "An account of the troops employed by his Prussian Majesty, in pursuance of the last treaty signed at the Hague, as far as the account can be made up." This was objected to by

*Lord*



*Lord Grenville*, who said it was impossible to procure the particulars on that head, as his Majesty's ministers had not themselves received them.

*The Earl of Lauderdale* said, that as commissioners had been appointed to watch over the motions of that army, they must certainly be in possession of every circumstance; and he was therefore certain, that there could be no ground of objection.

*The Earl of Guildford* then moved a similar Address for an account of the money paid to his Prussian Majesty, in pursuance of that treaty.—Ordered.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THURSDAY, Jan. 29.

The Bill for suspending the *Habeas Corpus Act* was read a third time, on the motion of the Attorney General.—On the putting of the question, "That this Bill do pass,"

*Mr. Sheridan*, who had just entered the House, observed, that he happened to be absent yesterday, when his Right Hon. Friend had taken notice of the doctrine of the Crown lawyers on the law of treason, and the necessity there might be of coming to a declaratory law upon the subject. When that matter should be brought forward, he should be ready to deliver his sentiments.

The question being put, That this Bill do pass, the House divided:

<i>For it</i>	-	-	62
<i>Against it</i>	•	-	4
			—
<i>Majority</i>	-		58

*Mr. Morris Robinson* gave notice, That on Thursday he should have a motion to make, relative to the use of flour in hair-powder.

*Mr. Sheridan* said, that if the calculation he had seen of the consumption of flour in the way of powder for the military be a just one, it would be a matter of very serious consideration of the House, and they ought to come to some measure to prevent, as much as possible, any scarcity of bread.

The Mutiny Bill was ordered to be read a second time on Monday next.

## HOUSE OF LORDS.

SATURDAY, Jan. 31.

The Bill for renewing an Act passed last Session of Parliament, empowering his Majesty to secure and detain such persons as shall be suspected of conspiring against his person and government, was a read a second time.—Ordered to be committed on Monday.

## HOUSE OF LORDS.

MONDAY, Feb. 2.

The Bill for suspending the *Habeas Corpus* Act passed the Committee.

*The Earl of Lauderdale* conceiving that clause which extends the power of this Bill to the last day of the present session of Parliament, was highly dangerous, because Parliament might be kept sitting to any period in order to keep the Bill in full force, moved, that the words "first day of July next," be inserted, instead of the last day of the present session of Parliament. The question being put thereon, it was negatived without a division.

The remaining clauses were then read and agreed to, and the Bill reported and ordered to be read a third time the next day.

Ordered, that the Lords be summoned.—Adjourned.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS.

MONDAY, Feb. 2.

*The Speaker* suggested to Gentlemen who had private business to transact, the propriety of their coming down to form a House at an earlier hour than has been customary during the present session: He observed, that he always attended at three o'clock, and was ready to take the chair then.

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that the message which he had been led to imagine he should be able to lay before the House relative to the Austrian loan that day, he must defer until Wednesday, and therefore he proposed, that the discussion on that subject should take place on Thursday.

### MOTION FOR PEACE.

*Mr. Grey* proposed, that the motion of which he had given notice, and which related in some degree to the last he brought forward, on the subject of the war, might be brought forward

forward on Wednesday, as he thought the object was of a pressing nature in point of time as well as importance.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer gave it as his opinion, that it would be inconvenient to have two nights succeeding each other for the discussion of subjects of such great importance. He had no desire to postpone the discussion of the motion of the Hon. Gentleman, but it appeared to him that the proposed arrangement would be very inconvenient.

It was thereupon understood that Mr. Grey's motion should come on on Friday.

#### PETITION FOR PEACE.

Mr. Grey then presented a petition from the merchants and other inhabitants of Southampton, complaining of the indefinite object of the war, the loss of blood and treasure by which it had been attended, and the manner in which we had been deserted by our allies; and praying that the House would exert every means which its wisdom could direct for procuring peace.—Ordered to be laid on the table.

A new writ was ordered for the borough of Leicester.

The thanks of the House, upon the motion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, were voted to the Chaplain, for the sermon which he preached on the 30th of January last; and he was desired to print it.

#### SIGNED PETITION OF LIVERY RESPECTING THE WAR.

Mr. Alderman Curtis presented a petition on behalf of the Liverymen of London, stating their attachment to the constitution, that they saw with concern that the war was not brought to a conclusion, but that they relied on the exertions of our army and navy, as well as the wisdom of the House, to procure a permanent and honourable peace, when it could be obtained consistently with the honour and the safety of this country.

The question being put, "That this petition be laid on the table,"

Mr. Sheridan observed, that the worthy Alderman called this petition, the Petition of the Liverymen of London. As the House were likely to have petitions in abundance for peace, it would be right that those who directed their representatives to present them, should know, when petitions were signed, whether they were to be understood in that House as petitions for war, or petitions for peace. There were many names, he observed, to the present petition; he did not mean to insinuate that they were not respectable men, on the contrary, he had no doubt they were so; but when it was stated that

that this was the petition of the Livery of London, it was necessary that neither the House of Commons nor the Public should be misinformed upon that point. There had already been held a very numerous meeting of the Livery of London, who had petitioned that House for peace. Did the worthy Alderman mean to deny that the sense of the Livery of London, in Common Hall assembled, had not been decidedly expressed in favour of peace, and that a peace as speedily as possible? It was absolutely necessary therefore that petitioners should understand the precise terms of their petitions, and above all, the use that their representatives made of them. Many Liverymen signed the petition which was agreed upon at the Common Hall, and which had been already laid upon the table of that House; was it to be insinuated that the petition just presented came from a more respectable body of the same Livery, and was intended to pass in that House as a sort of counter-petition? He had no doubt but that many of the respectable persons who signed this petition might have been told that this petition was worded in a more temperate and respectful manner, than that which had been agreed upon at the Common Hall, and that such a representation of the matter might have induced many, who signed it, to do so; and yet the intention might be, to use it as a petition for a continuance of war. He was justified in suspecting this to be the case, and in saying so, for he knew the tricks and shuffles by which the Public were so frequently imposed upon. The whole system upon which the war had been commenced and carried on, was a system of misrepresentation and delusion. It was in this manner some persons had already been induced to sign some petitions, and he had no doubt, by which others would be tampered with—It was the minister's system. Nothing would better illustrate the answer which the minister had advised his Majesty to give to the Address of the Court of Common Council of the city of London. Did not the Common Council understand they were asking for a peace as speedily as could be obtained, consistently with the honour and safety of this country? In his Majesty's answer was there to be found one word about peace? On the contrary, did he not declare he considered it as an encouragement to continue the war? This was the system of ministers.—If they really wished for petitions for carrying on a vigorous prosecution of the war, upon their own plans, why did they not come at once boldly forward, and say that such was their intention? Why did not Members who presented such petitions avow it candidly to be their intention to support the minister in his own way, until he shall establish a government

of his own forming, or until this country was ruined? If that was what they meant, let them come boldly forward and avow it. If this was fairly and honestly explained, they would not get the names of honest men to any petitions so ambiguously worded, as to admit of the possibility of making more than one construction upon them. If this was properly understood by the people, he would venture to say, they would not get the names of twenty men to any petition that asked for any thing but peace, unless they were contractors, pensioners, and jobbers, who derived all their wealth from that which ought to go into the bowels of the poor. He should be happy to hear any explanation upon this petition from the worthy Alderman who presented it.

*Mr. Alderman Curtis* said, every person who read the petition that he had presented, must at first sight discover its intention: The meaning was too obvious to require explanation. With regard to the proceedings in the Common Hall, to which the Hon. Gentleman had alluded, the majority there were a violent party, determined to hear only one side of the subject, and they refused to hear him—Neither were they all Liverymen—Not one-half of them were Liverymen; there were some, no doubt, respectable men among them, but the majority, he believed, were not of the Livery. With regard to the petition now presented to the House, he could only say it was left at the London Tavern for signatures, and there had been no improper influence used, nor any interference, on his part at least. Those who had signed, whom he knew, were respectable persons; they expressed themselves as friends of peace, but how was a permanent peace to be obtained under the present circumstances? By a vigorous prosecution of the war. He wished for peace as much as any man, but the way he had mentioned was, in his opinion, the only way to obtain peace.

*Mr. Grey* adverted to the sort of explanation which the worthy Alderman had been pleased to give upon this subject: What was the meaning of that explanation? He told the House he was a sincere well-wisher for peace! If he meant, generally, a well-wisher to peace, it amounted to nothing, for that all descriptions of men must be. The worthy Alderman said, he was convinced, that the only way to procure a permanent peace was by a vigorous prosecution of the war—that was, in other words, to continue the war, on the principle of establishing in France a government, suitable, in the minister's opinion, to maintaining the relations of peace and amity. We were at war now for the purpose of destroying the present form of government of France. Then let the Liverymen

Liverymen of London understand, that their representative understood he presented a petition for peace only when it cannot be obtained, without the destruction of the present government of France. Was this so, or was it not? Mr. Grey said, he believed the whole of this business to be founded on a system of delusion. If any body doubted what use was to be made of petitions of this kind, let them look at the King's answer to one of them, and which had been taken notice of by his Hon. Friend, in which there was not one word said of peace. Let the citizens of London know, that the use which was to be made of their last petition, was to employ it as an instrument for the encouragement of the prosecution of the war.

*Mr. Alderman Newnham* said, the sense of the Livery of London had not been taken at the Common Hall; the proportion of Liverymen at the Common Hall, which had been alluded to, was very small indeed. Many strangers took the places of Liverymen, and assumed their authority. He had no difficulty in saying that the present was a direct counter-petition of that which had been agreed upon in that Common Hall. He was confident that if the opinions of the Livery were truly taken, they would be for the continuance of this war, until such a peace could be brought about, as might be permanent. The government of France, in its present form, ought not to be treated with; he would go further, and say that he did not think that any government of France ought to be treated with, possessing the territory which France now possessed; Holland, Flanders, part of Spain and Italy, in addition to her own dominions, properly so denominated. He should prefer any war to peace with France, while it possessed its present territory, because if we agreed with France for peace, in its present possessions, we should sign the death-warrant of this country. He was astonished it could be thought of in any place; he should be astonished, indeed, if a majority of that House should agree to make peace with France at the present moment; for his part, he would advise the nation to come to its last struggle, rather than do what could not but be considered as most humiliating and degrading, and not less injurious to the interests than to the honour of the country. This, he believed, was the opinion of a large majority of the Livery of London: But at the Common Hall, the sentiments of those present were collected very unsafely.

*Mr. Alderman Anderson* agreed with his worthy colleagues as to the petition now before the House. He said it was

signed by 1655 persons, and they all knew the contents of it. They wished for peace only on an honourable footing.

*Mr. Sheridan* said, he did not mean to make any insinuation against the petitioners, but he was glad that the matter had been in some degree explained, and that this was now to be understood as a counter-petition to that agreed upon at the Common Hall. But the worthy Aldermen had thrown out something like an insinuation against the Common Hall, by which he believed they would not abide. They had said, that the proceedings of that Common Hall did not express the sense of a majority of the Livery of London. Let them try the effect in another Common Hall.

*Mr. Alderman Le Mesurier* said, that the proceedings of the Common Hall were very unfair: Many Gentlemen attempted to deliver their sentiments, but the company would not hear them. He, for one, was in that situation; he attempted to deliver his sentiments; he was received by a volley of hooting and hissing; this he thought highly improper, for he had a right to deliver his sentiments: The truth was, the company did not consist of Liverymen. He had a list of a vast number of persons who had no right to be there, among whom were six Americans. He would say nothing against the chief magistrate of the city; but it somehow happened that the barriers about the Hall were broken down; who did it he could not tell. In short, the company at Guildhall on that day, differed only in one thing from the meeting at Chalk Farm; that meeting knew what they were doing when they held up their hands, for their resolutions were printed; but the others knew nothing of what was doing. He declared himself a friend to peace, but he was confident we could not get a speedy and honourable one. He asserted his independence in his vote in that House; and declared it was extremely hard, that the independent representatives of the city of London should be classed with jobbers and contractors. For his own part, he was one of those who were losers by the war; and he could honestly say, he was neither thirsting after place nor power. What, he asked, were the terms upon which we could hope at present to make peace? We must disband our army, dismantle our navy, and derange our whole military establishment. Like the lion in the fable, we must suffer our teeth to be drawn out, and then fall a prey to those who now dread our power.

*Mr. Fox* said, that with regard to the company at the Common Hall not having the civility of hearing the worthy Alderman with patience, it was too often, perhaps, the case  
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in popular meetings; companies of that sort did not often listen very attentively to what they did not like; but if the description, which had been given of that meeting by the worthy magistrates, be a just one, it was a little singular they should have contended for the honour of presenting to the House of Commons, the very petition which that company agreed upon, and that it had actually been presented without the least intimation to the House, that it was voted by persons, a large majority of whom were not Liverymen. On the contrary, it was opened by the worthy Alderman as the petition of the Liverymen of London in Common Hall assembled. As to the cavil about a speedy peace, the public common sense of that sentence was not, that we should make a hasty dishonourable peace, but that ministers should set about putting our affairs in a train that might facilitate the arriving at peace; this was meant by endeavouring to negotiate; that was his sense of the duty of ministers when he talked of a speedy peace, and that he believed to be the sense of a very large portion of the Public.

*Mr. Alderman Curtis* disclaimed the idea of throwing any sort of slur or odium on the Liverymen who attended the Common Hall—nothing could be farther from his intention at all times.

The petition was ordered to be laid on the table.

The Marine Mutiny Bill was read a first, and ordered to be read a second time.

*Mr. Fox* said, as most of the objects, for which he moved the call of the House, had been answered, and as many Members had since obtained leave of absence from the House, he should move that the call of the House, which stood for the next day, be discharged.—Ordered.

*Mr. Grey* expressed his sense of the importance of the subject which was to be brought forward that night, relative to the more effectually supplying the naval service. It was necessary the House should have full information upon the subject. He had been told, that there were actually in this country, at this time, a body of seamen, who were either not employed at all, or employed in such a manner as made them but of little use. He understood that they amounted to near ten thousand: He therefore moved, "That there be laid before the House, an account of the number of men and boys, employed in barges, boats, &c. in the service of the Board of Admiralty, and who enjoy protection from them."

The like motions with regard to the Navy Board, Victualling, Ordnance, Excise, and Customs—as also those employed on



on the river, in the Watermens Company; all which were ordered.

*Mr. Brandling* moved, "That an account be laid before the House of the number of watermen employed and protected by the nobility."

*Mr. Sheridan* thought this a very proper motion, as it was notorious that these protections were bought and sold at the present day.

*Mr. Grey* thought it would not be easy to obtain this account, as it must be by an individual application to each nobleman. He should wish, therefore, that the House would apply to the House of Peers, requesting them to waive their privilege during the war.

*Mr. Dundas* thought, that it would not be decorous to make such application. The number might be known, because they were registered in the books of the Watermens Company.

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* expressed a desire of knowing the number; but agreed with *Mr. Dundas*, that it would be proper that such a motion should originate in that House. He recommended to withdraw the motion.

The motion was withdrawn.

*Mr. Estlin* moved, "That an account be laid before the House, of the protections granted by the Cinque Ports."

A short conversation ensued, in which it was declared by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and *Mr. Pybus*, that there were no protections except for the ticket-men, who were employed to navigate homeward-bound vessels, when any of their men had been impressed; and that this motion was included in the first of *Mr. Grey's*, as those protections were granted by the Admiralty.

The motion was withdrawn.

*Mr. Burdon* moved, "That there be laid before the House, the number of men and boys employed in the East India service, together with the numbers protected by that Company."

*Mr. Sturt* moved for an account of the number of press-gangs, and the number of men of which they consist.

The question was put on each motion, and agreed to.

*Mr. Sturt* then moved for the number of gun-boats and tenders in the impress service, and the number of men employed in each; which was also agreed to.

*Mr. Curwen* moved for an account of the bounty-money given to seamen, from the 1st of January 1793 to 1795, together with the number of men who received the same.—Agreed to.

## PRUSSIAN SUBSIDY.

*Mr. Jekyll* said, that he had at an early period moved for papers relative to the Prussian subsidy, and he could not conceive for what good purposes they were withheld. He thought them a ground of consideration respecting the propriety of the projected Austrian loan, and as that was to come on to be discussed on Thursday, it was very essential that such papers should be upon the table before that time.

*Mr. Dundas* said, that they should be produced the next day.

## MANNING OF THE NAVY.

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* moved, that the order of the day should be read, for "the House to resolve itself into a Committee, to consider of a plan for the more speedy and effectual manning of his Majesty's navy."

The House accordingly resolved itself into a Committee, Lord Arden in the chair.

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* stated, that it was not at present his object to enter at large into the nature of the plan which he should submit to the Committee. With respect to the necessity and expediency of the measure, in the situation in which the country was placed, all sides of the House had unanimously concurred; it would, therefore, only be wasting their time to dwell on points, which had already so frequently and fervently called forth the support and approbation of every Member present. Except, then, any Gentleman should be particularly desirous of any explanation in the present stage, his wish was, rather to meet the discussion, by bringing in a Bill, and then proceeding as fast as possible to the Committee, when the blanks might be filled up and the Bill printed, allowing a sufficient interval for all the parts of the kingdom to take the different clauses into their consideration, and to communicate any information that might appear to them to be material. There was only one general consideration to which he should call their attention in the outset of the business. All had expressed, and, he trusted, sincerely felt the necessity of great and unusual burdens, in order to meet the scale of exertions which it was incumbent upon the country to make in the present crisis. If they felt, as they ought, the pressure of that necessity, they must likewise make up their minds to the consequence—a great degree of inconvenience which must unavoidably be sustained. To this consequence they must be prepared to submit, except it could be proved either that the inconvenience was such as to outweigh the benefit to be reaped from the measure, or that some more  
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convenient mode could be devised of carrying the same measure, or something likely to prove equally efficient, into effect. He trusted that in the present instance, instead of attempts being made to throw the burden upon one particular class, instead of jealousy being produced between interests, mistakenly considered as opposite, all classes of the community would cheerfully unite to consider what was the proportion which each could afford to bear, and in what manner the exertions of the country could be most effectually called forth.

In proposing the means by which the plan now before the Committee might best be carried into effect, he must, he said, necessarily look to the great sources of the national force. The principal of these undoubtedly was the trade of the country. He should look to the mercantile marine; first, as it was the quarter best qualified to supply the exertions, which were at present called for; and secondly, because, so far as there was a separate interest, none were more interested than the ship-owners and merchants, that the country should be able to meet the naval force of the enemy, to maintain its superiority by sea, and to supply adequate convoys. The plan which he had to propose would be attended with two advantages. It would first relieve the outward-bound trade of the country from the inconvenience resulting from an uncertain degree of pressing; and secondly, it would prevent the necessity of an embargo, a measure which had been resorted to in many former wars. The plan which he had to propose went to fix a certain number of men to be furnished by every vessel previous to clearing out, in proportion to its tonnage, for the service of the royal navy. This would operate as an embargo on every individual ship, till it had furnished its particular quota; and the convenience with which it would be able to prosecute its voyage, would depend on the alacrity with which it contributed to the public service. On examining the Custom-house books for 1793, down to the month of September, he found that the total of the shipping of Scotland and England employed 100,000 men, and that the proportion of men to the tonnage was about one man for every fourteen tons. He proposed to take about one seaman out of every seven who were employed; though indeed it was not necessary that they should all be able men, as he would hold out an alternative, that the ship-owners, if they were so disposed, might, instead of one seaman, provide two landmen. No proportion was to be required from any vessel of less than thirty-five tons burden; every vessel above thirty-five and less than seventy to find one landman; every vessel above seventy up to an hundred and five, to find one seaman or two landmen; and so on to an hundred and forty; and above that to find

one landman progressively for the proportion of every fifty tons. The reason why he made this distinction between larger and smaller vessels, requiring the one to furnish a landman in the proportion of every thirty-five, and the other, where above a certain tonnage, only one in the proportion of every fifty, was, that the larger vessels made a voyage perhaps only once a year, whereas the smaller vessels employed in the coasting trade made several, and had therefore much more frequent occasion for the protection of convoy. He computed that the whole number of men obtained in this way, might amount to between 18 and 20,000, and if the measure he had just stated had taken place in 1793, it would have produced 20,000 men, As it was intended to prevent the vessels from clearing out, till they should have furnished their limited number of men, it was his object, that they should then be permitted to clear out as speedily as possible. From the communications which he had had with Gentlemen from different parts of the country, he had the satisfaction to understand, that there was no part of his plan liable to insuperable objections. It was his intention also to call upon the country for some supply of landmen, for the service of the navy. This supply he meant to raise according to the number of parishes in the kingdom, and reckoning one man for the proportion, it might produce a force of about ten thousand men. Some parishes might not be able singly to furnish one—others perhaps more. The way in which he meant to ascertain the number, was by a list of the inhabited houses, not exempted from taxes. The mode of distributing the proportion, and of arranging the means by which it was to be raised, he would leave to the justices of peace, at a special sessions, to be held for the purpose—providing only that a larger sum than should be adequate to the bounty given to volunteers, should be levied upon every parish which should be a defaulter. By this means all those who came forward would be volunteers, and in consequence of the fine levied upon defaulters being larger than the bounty required, a motive would be afforded to all the parishes to exert themselves to the utmost in the way of raising men; and supposing that there are 10,000 parishes in the kingdom, each parish to furnish one, would consequently give 10,000 men. There was another quarter to which he meant to have recourse; the extent of the assistance to be derived from which, he was yet unable to estimate: This was, by raising a certain number of men out of those who were employed in the inland navigation, on navigable rivers and canals. To this quarter he looked as an excellent nursery for our seamen, as those engaged in the inland navigation, from the mode of their education and the habits of their life,

were well qualified for the sea service. Before, however, he could ascertain the probable amount of this supply, it would be necessary to procure a list of the barges employed in different parts of the kingdom. There was only one other measure which he should submit to the Committee; a measure which had been adopted in former wars, though not with all the effect which it might have been calculated to produce. This was, to pass an Act enabling the magistrates to apprehend all idle and disorderly persons who might be able to serve his Majesty, and who could give no account of their means of procuring a livelihood. This measure had been adopted in 1778 and 1779; it was then employed for the purpose of recruiting the army; it was now intended to be exclusively applied to the service of the navy. He had thus stated the general outline of his plan, which was all that he proposed upon the present occasion; he would conclude with moving for leave to bring in the several Bills for the different purposes he had stated. He therefore moved for leave to bring in a Bill requiring owners and masters of ships to furnish a certain number of men, &c.

*Mr. Harrison* acknowledged that the present propositions were conducted, on the part of the Right Hon. Gentleman who brought them forward, with great candour, and he by no means dissented from him in opinion, that great exertions were at present necessary towards manning the navy. He would not give his decided opinion at present whether these were the most advisable means to be resorted to, but he was rather inclined to think that they were not, as they appeared to operate in a manner which he apprehended would be deemed by many not only partial but oppressive. He thought they bore particularly hard upon the commercial and trading interests of the country, and also upon the landed, in a certain degree. Whenever the Bill or Bills, for carrying them into effect, should be brought before the House, he said he would move a clause, which would have for its object the taxing of all sorts of places and pensions above a certain yearly sum. He thought it absolutely necessary, that when the merchant, the trader, and the landholder, were called upon in the severe manner they would be by these propositions, if carried into effect, to contribute to the service of the state over and above what they paid to the general taxes of the kingdom, those who derived such splendid incomes from the places and pensions they hold, ought to contribute, in an equal proportion at least, to any additional taxes, it should be deemed necessary to burden other descriptions of subjects with, in consequence of any extraordinary measures which it might be advisable to resort to on particular and urgent occasions. Though this proposition might  
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not be generally relished, he contended that it was *not* a *new* one, for they all knew that subscriptions had been raised in that manner for a purpose certainly not more important to the nation—he meant the scrutiny after a certain election. In the present case, as he before observed, these provisions would operate very heavily upon the landholder, the trader, and the merchant: He therefore gave notice that in some proper stage of the Bill, he would take an opportunity of moving a clause to the following effect:—"That every person holding or enjoying a place or pension of 300*l.* a year, should provide one seaman, or two landmen, for the service of the navy; persons possessing 400*l.* a year, two seamen, or three landmen; persons holding 500*l.* a year, two seamen, or four landmen; and for every 100*l.* above 500*l.* to whatever extent of sum, that one man should be added." This, he said, would be but fair and reasonable; it would be only obliging those Gentlemen, and others who received so very liberally from the bounty of the state, to contribute in some degree a proportion of their incomes to its necessities; and he thought no reasonable or impartial man would hesitate to say, that when great emergencies demanded such extraordinary exertions, it would ill become men, situated as were those of whom he was speaking, to shrink from such a proposal, or to endeavour to counteract it. Indeed, he only mentioned the matter then in order to give notice to the Gentlemen on the other side of the House, of what he intended to do in case his Majesty's ministers should not anticipate him on the subject. As the Right Hon. Gentleman had only given the outline of his plan, he might possibly intend to bring some such measure as he had mentioned into the body of his Bill. If such were his intentions, or if, upon considering what had fallen from him, the Right Hon. Gentleman should introduce any clause to the same effect, it would give him great pleasure to see it proceed from a quarter from which it would issue with so much greater weight, force, and propriety.

*Mr. Jolliffe* said, that notwithstanding he must acknowledge the pressure of the occasion to be great, and that he would by no means wish to throw obstacles in the way of effectually manning the navy with as much speed as possible, yet he could not let the occasion pass without observing, that the mode proposed to be adopted, tended greatly to partiality, and bore, in a very great proportion, heavier on many classes of men than it did on others. The Right Hon. Gentleman had, by his propositions, stated, that he intended to take a considerable number of men from our inland navigations, and from the flats plying on our rivers. He was of opinion that 10,000 were too many to be expected from the labourers in this country, and thought there was another set of men that could

much more profitably be drained for the public service. Why were the honest, industrious, and laborious part of the community to be thus harassed and called from their homes and families, when there were so many idle and useless members of it suffered to remain quietly at home, to the infinite detriment of the other sex, on whose stations and privileges they very materially encroached? He meant those whose occupations could as well be carried on by the other sex, for instance, hair-dressers, particularly now that the use of hair-powder was to be limited; likewise that useless and unmanly set of beings, men-milliners, men-haberdashers, &c. who curtailed the places of females, great numbers of whom might be employed in houses and shops into which they could not at present get admission. The unnecessary number of footmen and attendants of different denominations kept by the nobility and the rich, he thought might well supply a very considerable proportion, without being any-ways missed.

*Mr. Fox* said, that the general object of supplying the navy with men in the readiest and best possible manner, was one that had his most hearty concurrence, as any proposition would that tended to bring it about. The exertion proposed was certainly a strong one, and the question therefore came to be, Whether there was any certainty that the benefit to be derived from such a measure for the service of the country, would be equal to its inconvenience? He approved of the plan which the Right Hon. Gentleman had taken in bringing forward the business, because it afforded time to collect the sentiments of the country upon a very material and important question to the interests of a very large part of the community: Until, therefore, that sense was obtained, he would not go into any detail of the particulars which had been then submitted to the House. At present, however, it was proper that he should say a few words:—He thought it highly necessary that the House should digest well whether the real object, the manning of the navy, could be gained by the steps they were taking? If this object was gained, it surely was a most desirable one; but if, on the other hand, the scheme tended only to operate as a tax, by which money was to be raised, said to be for the purpose of manning the navy, it became a very different matter, and required the same consideration which any other mode of taxation did. With regard to the effect of the Rt. Hon. Gentleman's mode of taxing the parishes, as well as the commercial interest, he would say nothing decisive, until he knew in what way defaulters were to be compelled to raise their quota, and what punishment was to be inflicted on those who did not. As to ascertaining the population of the parishes from the houses paying the window-tax, he did not think that a good criterion: Many

Many motions had been made for returns, to ascertain that point, by all of which he found, there did not appear to have been an increase for the last thirty years. All these observations, however, would come more properly at some future discussion.

At the present awful crisis, and when they were entering, or rather had entered, upon a course of the strongest measures that any crisis could justify, Mr. Fox said, he should expect to see the preamble of every Bill for such purposes run thus, if it could be so stated with truth:—"Whereas every rational and honourable means have been pursued, to restore the blessings of peace, and such means having failed, it is necessary," &c. If this could be stated with truth, so as to produce conviction on the minds of the people at large, he was confident, that notwithstanding the losses, the distresses, and the hardships which had already attended the war, there would not be a single murmur throughout the nation, nor any want of proper men for the public service; if, on the contrary, this could not be said with truth, he was afraid the same discontent would remain amongst the people, and the same backwardness to enter into the service. Until therefore something was clearly and explicitly declared that could convince the nation, that there was a desire on the part of this country to obtain peace; he trusted such motions as his Hon. Friend had given notice of would be frequently repeated, and that those who saw the necessity for them, would not relax in their exertions from any temporary want of success, because he was sure, in the end, it would be seen that they had been taking the best probable means to serve their country. When he talked of these motions for peace, he did not wish to be tied down by critical remarks on the meaning of words, but to go at once into the real substance of such motions, *viz.* an explicit avowal that we were not at war for the purpose of making a government for France, or of destroying her present government, but that it was for British interests alone that we continued the war. Convince the people by such a declaration, and he knew it would give them general satisfaction. For whatever was the government of France when it was necessary for this country to adopt such strong measures, those who propose them ought always to accompany them with an avowal of their wishes and intention to bring about a peace, and that we only carried on a defensive war, not merely so in words but in fact. This intention to treat with the present government of France for peace, was completely denied by the minister's late declaration. Every one must allow that the measure that day proposed was an extraordinary and an inconvenient one, and such as could not have been expected, except as going hand-in-hand with an



avowed desire to make peace. Mr. Fox said, he could not help noticing the Address of the Common Council of the city of London, which, though not worded in a manner that he could compliment them upon, yet it certainly meant and expressed a decided wish for peace. From his Majesty's Answer, however, one would be led to imagine, that they actually wished a continuance of the war, and that he was pleased to hear it, which, he was sorry to say, strongly signified that there was nothing in the councils that advised his Majesty like a desire for peace. He warned ministers against ambiguity and deception in their dealings with the nation; these were dangerous times, and delays in making such declarations as they ought to do, made them more so. This was the time to speak out boldly, fairly, and intelligibly; the people ought not to be misled, and when they were sufficiently satisfied and convinced, the firmest reliance might be had upon their energy and vigour. He concluded by complimenting the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the propriety of the mode he had given notice of, for conducting this important measure, which undoubtedly required time and consideration.

*Mr. Curwen* thought the proposed measure would be severely and partially felt by the coasting and coal trades, by obliging those who had not men to give, to buy them; otherwise it would fall as an embargo on their trade.

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* stated some intended exceptions; he agreed that it was his intention that those who did not give their quota, should pay money, or suffer an embargo; but those hardships were nothing to be compared in expence or effect, to a general embargo, or a very hot press, if the exigency of the country should require it.

*Sir Francis Baring* made several objections to the plan; and thought that means more lenient might be adopted, first: *Sir Francis* said, that he could not let the present opportunity pass without stating a few circumstances which struck him forcibly as tending to weaken the effects intended to be produced by the present propositions, if carried into execution. He feared they would tend to injure, in no small degree, the ship-owners and merchants of this country, by imposing an additional burden upon them at a time when those already existing were too heavy to bear. The measure called upon the owners of ships to provide a certain number of men over and above their own proper complement, and was to operate as a complete embargo on the sailing of their ships till such men were actually found for the service of Government. When the ship-owners came to resort to the different ports and places where it was said fifty were to be found at one, and an hundred at another; they, on inquiring what was become of this hundred, might be told that forty out  
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of that hundred were in prisons in France. [It was said in a low voice across the House, *No, not so.*] The Hon. Baronet replied, "Indeed, Sir, I believe you will find it is true." The number of prisoners in France were, he said, from thirty to forty thousand, and he wished some means of exchanging them could be thought of, as that would afford a very considerable supply to the navy.

*Mr. Burdon* rose to deliver his sentiments on the measure, but was proceeding into desultory matter, that was thought irrelevant, and was called to order.

*Mr. Branning* said a few words, and observed that there had been a very full public meeting at Newcastle, where only one person thought of moving a petition for peace, which was immediately rejected.

*Mr. Grey* approved of the fair and candid manner in which the business had been brought forward. It was, he said, a very strong measure, and could only be justified by necessity. He declared he perfectly coincided in the sentiments stated by his Right Hon. Friend (*Mr. Fox*), whose arguments he followed, thinking that the plan ought to be accompanied by a declaration, that every means would be taken to obtain peace. An Hon. Gentleman had alluded to a meeting at Newcastle; what he had said on that matter was mostly true, but in fairness he ought to have stated, that the motion for peace was not negatived, from a desire to continue the war, but because the meeting was called for another purpose, and it was considered, that it would be wrong to bring forward a motion they were not prepared for. He was certain, *Mr. Grey* said, that the people of Newcastle, and in every part of the country, were unanimously for peace. He thought there might have been various other means tried before they had recourse to the present measure, and agreed with the Hon. Baronet, respecting the great number of our seamen being prisoners in France, which ought to be exchanged, except it was determined to carry on this war, in a manner different from all the common principles of other wars. Forty thousand of our sailors were confidently said to be in confinement in the hands of the enemy. This was a tremendous number to be deprived of in the hour of need, and shewed how very absurd it was for ministers to persist in such ridiculous pride and obstinacy. They would not even acknowledge the French government so far as to make an exchange of prisoners. For his part he thought it was their duty to acknowledge immediately the French republic, not only for the purpose of effecting so desirable a measure as that of an exchange of prisoners, but for the further  
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and more important one of opening the way and laying the foundation for a negotiation for a speedy and immediate peace. Mr. Grey made some observations on the measure as a tax, and was much against that part of it, which went to enlarge the discretionary power of magistrates in sending whomever they thought fit for sea on board of ships as disorderly persons.

*Alderman Curtis* said, that violent disorders required violent remedies : Such he considered the present crisis of affairs ; and as such the different propositions of the Chancellor of the Exchequer met his idea, and had his hearty concurrence. Several other members said a few words in the loose conversation that obtained on the subject.

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* explained what operation the proposition would have, as a tax upon trade.

*Mr. Strutt* found fault with several parts of the proposed plan.

The resolutions were then severally put and carried, and the House being resumed—

*Lord Arden* reported them, and leave was given to bring in a Bill upon the first resolution, which was read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time the next day.

The Committee of Ways and Means, and Supply, were deferred till Wednesday.

*The Secretary at War* moved the second reading of the Mutiny Bill, which being done, it was committed for Monday next. A short altercation took place between Mr. Manwaring, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Plomer, Mr. Windham, Mr. Rolle, Mr. Wigley, &c. relative to a petition which Mr. Manwaring had presented some time ago from the innkeepers, complaining of grievances, which he thought had been rather neglected ; the result was, that upon motion it was referred to a Committee the next day in the Speaker's chamber, and to report their opinion to the House.

Adjourned at 8 o'clock.

## HOUSE OF LORDS.

TUESDAY, Feb. 3.

### HABEAS CORPUS ACT.

*Lord Grenville* moved the order of the day, for the third reading of the Bill for continuing the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus Act*.

*The Earl of Lauderdale* rose to move an amendment, "That the words 'last day of the present sessions' to be left out ; and those 'of the first day of July next' substituted in their stead."

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His Lordship said, he should not have occasion to trouble their Lordships to any great length in support of his amendment, as he understood it would be acquiesced in—nevertheless it was in some degree necessary for him to state as concisely as possible a few of the reasons which induced him to move it. The *Habeas Corpus* Act was originally passed by our ancestors as one of the grand bulwarks of the constitution, for the security of the liberty of the subject, against the power of the Crown, and it was intended by those who framed and passed it, that it should never be suspended by any other power than that of Parliament; nor even by Parliament itself, without some certain limited time being fixed for the continuance of that suspension.

His Lordship said he was warranted in what he said by the doctrine of Judge Blackstone upon this subject, who, in treating of it, expressly says, "That this Act cannot be suspended even for a single day, by any power but that of Parliament," and not even then, but on the clearest proof of some great and important danger to the state, can it be justified. If their Lordships would take the trouble to read the words of the Bill as they at present stood, they would perceive that a power was thereby vested in the Crown to continue the suspension of this law, which was the great defence of the liberty of the subject, to an indefinite time.

He would allow, that in the present times, and with the present Parliament, so much danger was not to be apprehended, as had been the case in some times and with some Parliaments; but in a case of such immense magnitude and importance as the present, every caution provided by the wisdom of our ancestors, for the security of the liberty of the subject, should be strictly adhered to. Perhaps in the state of the present Parliament, as to continuance, it might not be so very material, but it was a dangerous thing to admit a bad precedent; and if this were allowed to pass, it might be quoted in future, when the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act might be deemed necessary for the general good, to take place in the beginning of a new Parliament; and artful ministers might, by using the words last day of the present session, and afterwards advising the King not to prorogue the Parliament, continue the suspension of that inestimable law during the term of seven years. This was a consideration which pressed itself on his mind very much, and which therefore impelled him to move the present amendment. His Lordship said, that as he believed the amendment would meet with no opposition from the Noble Secretary, he should content himself with the observ-

ations he had made, and not trespass on the time of their Lordships any further.

*Lord Grenville* said, he did not mean to oppose the amendment of the Noble Earl. He did not, indeed, see the danger to be so great as the Noble Earl apprehended it to be, if the words remained as they stood in the Bill; for, according to the Noble Earl's own statement, the King could not continue the suspension for any great length of time without keeping the Parliament sitting, and while Parliament was sitting, his Lordship did not think much danger was to be dreaded: However, in a matter of this nature, as it was certainly best to be explicit, he should have no objection to the amendment of the Noble Earl being adopted: The amendment was agreed to, and the Bill read a third time.

*Lord Grenville* moved, "That the Bill do now pass." His Lordship said, that from the very full investigation which had taken place when this matter was before their Lordships last session, and from the abundant evidence which had been laid before their Lordships at that time, it would not be necessary for him to enter into a detail on the present occasion; that would detain them long. It might, perhaps, be thought by some that it was necessary to produce some new matter, or to shew that some *new conspiracy* was on foot, to induce their Lordships to agree to the present Bill; but this, his Lordship contended, was not the case. He begged leave to call to the recollection of their Lordships, that in the outset of the business they had appointed a Committee to investigate the subject, and to examine into the mass of papers which contained the evidence of the existence or non-existence of the conspiracy which was alleged to be on foot. His Lordship said, that Committee had proceeded on the business with a diligence and ability which nothing could surpass, and from papers laid before them belonging to the societies accused of this conspiracy, they had drawn up and laid before their Lordships a full, accurate, and interesting Report, which contained such ample proofs, that such a conspiracy did exist, as to leave no hesitation on the minds of their Lordships, of the absolute necessity of their passing the Bill. The Committee, his Lordship averred, had done themselves the highest honour, by the alacrity with which they undertook, and the assiduity with which they executed, the important trust committed to their charge; and the report they had made on the subject, was so strong and convincing, from the arrangement of the vast variety of papers it contained, as to leave no doubt on the mind of any rational man, either among their Lordships or in the kingdom at large,  
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that a dangerous conspiracy existed at that time. His Lordship was, he said, extremely glad to find that this had also been still more fully proved, by a judicial decision—(Here a cry of *Hear, hear, hear!*) He repeated that this had already been proved by a judicial decision. It seemed that his opinion was surprising to some of their Lordships, but still he contended it was founded on fair and just principles. Several persons belonging to the societies charged with this conspiracy had been arrested; and had since undergone their trials, before that legal and complete tribunal to investigate matters of this nature, and to pronounce decisively on them—a jury of their country: By this jury they had severally been acquitted of the crime of high treason, with which they stood charged. This was certainly true, and he by no means wished, or intended, to throw the smallest imputation on trial by jury, or to depreciate the verdicts by which they were so acquitted. Still, however, their acquittal was no proof that a conspiracy had never existed in this country. It only proved that in the case of the persons tried on a charge of high treason, the evidence was not sufficiently full and strong against them *individually*, to amount to that degree of completeness, which the law requires to convict persons tried for this greatest of all crimes. So far therefore from the trials of those individuals proving that there had been no conspiracy, the evidence adduced upon them, established beyond a doubt the existence of the conspiracy.

His Lordship requested the attention of the House while he took a cursory review of the conduct and practices of those societies, with regard to the people of a neighbouring country, from the commencement of their correspondence with them, and he thought it would be sufficient to impress every one of their Lordships with the same sentiments he entertained on the subject. During the time of the monarchy continuing in France, after the revolution took place, his Lordship said, all their correspondence was with the *French Jacobins* in Paris, and other parts of France, but no sooner was the destruction of monarchy effected, than they immediately opened a correspondence with the National Convention; and in one of their addresses they went so far as to say, “That they hoped soon to see similar addresses sent from that country to a National Convention in England.” After this he begged their Lordships to remember, that they began to concert measures for calling a Convention in England, for the wicked purpose of subverting and overturning the legal constitutional and settled government and liberties of this country.

It was impossible their Lordships should not remember the Convention that had actually taken place, in which men met

appointed by those self-created societies he had so often mentioned, who had gone to most an extraordinary length indeed. When he reflected on many of the measures they had adopted, and particularly on that one strong and audacious resolution, that among other things says, "If the present Parliament should think proper to pass any Bill to suspend the *Habeas Corpus* Act, or to countenance the landing foreign troops in the country, or in case of an invasion, a Secret Committee was appointed to re-assemble this body of men to act in such emergency"—he could not for a moment hesitate (and he trusted he should be joined by all their Lordships in the opinion) to believe that a most dangerous conspiracy existed of the nature before described.

His Lordship next alluded to the resolutions which had been passed by the several societies in England, subsequent to the meeting of the Convention in Scotland, in which they asserted that they could no longer trust to laws framed, as they boldly and insolently phrased it, by those whom they were pleased to call their plunderers and oppressors; but that they must resort to laws of their own making; and, for this purpose, steps were actually taken for calling a Convention in England, which was to overturn and destroy the monarchy, the aristocracy, and all the constituted authorities of the present government, and to introduce all that anarchy, confusion, misery, and bloodshed, which had deluged and wasted that distracted and unhappy country, for the purpose of substituting a government similar to that formed by the French, whose principles and proceedings they were so desirous to imitate and follow. This, his Lordship said, was evident from the affectation of imitating the Convention in the phrases, the terms, and the nature and name of their proceedings.

He adverted to what passed at the very extraordinary meeting held at Chalk Farm, as another proof of their intentions to call a Convention in England for the purposes alleged. It might be repeated, he said, that the late verdicts at the Session-House in the Old Bailey, negatived the whole of the conspiracy; but that he apprehended to be impossible, as the question before the Court and Jury was not, nor could it be, whether a conspiracy existed, but whether the persons put upon their trials were guilty to the extent stated in the indictments? His Lordship concluded by observing, as the late trials had afforded the strongest evidence that a conspiracy existed at the time of passing the original Bill for the Suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act; and as nothing had since appeared to convince their Lordships that this conspiracy was done away, and did not subsist at the present moment, he thought it unnecessary to

trouble their Lordships any further at present, and therefore should content himself with moving that the Bill do pass.

*The Earl of Guildford* said, he should not have deemed himself to have acted right, if, after hearing the arguments just advanced by the Noble Lord, he could have been contented with giving a silent vote upon the present motion. From what he had just heard from that Noble Lord, he felt himself impelled by his feelings in a peculiar degree to state his reasons for differing with that Noble Lord, and for giving his decided negative to the motion.

His Lordship said, it had always struck him, that, according to the principles of our excellent constitution, no Act of Parliament of that magnitude or of the importance which the *Habeas Corpus* Act undoubtedly was to the rights and liberties of the people, should be suspended, or the benefits of it taken away for ever so short a time, but in cases of the most urgent necessity, nor without a certain specific, weighty, and important reason for so doing, having been made apparent by the most undeniable proof. His Majesty's ministers, however, smarting under the lash of public disappointment and public disgrace, had ventured to come forward again, and call upon Parliament for a further suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act. He did imagine, that, on hearing of the renewal of the present Bill, he should have heard that some new dangers had arisen, which would sanction such a measure; but there did not appear to him to be the least shadow of danger.

The argument of the Noble Lord had been extraordinary indeed. In the course of the last session, the Noble Lord had moved for the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act; and before it was obtained, a Report of a Select Committee, appointed by their Lordships, containing a mass of evidence, which the Report stated it to be the opinion of the Committee, formed sufficient proof that a conspiracy which was dangerous to the constitution and the government did exist, and on this mass of evidence their Lordships had consented to the passing of such Bill. In consequence of this Bill having passed into a law, by receiving the complete assent of the whole Legislature, and in order to prove to the people of England, and to the world at large, that the opinion of the Committee first, and of their Lordships afterwards, was well founded; certain individuals belonging to particular societies, amongst which this conspiracy was said to exist, were arrested, and, after some months confinement, were put upon their trial for this conspiracy. *The Noble Earl* said, he believed there never was a subject, either in this or any other country, that underwent so long, so ample, and so deliberate and attentive a discussion and investigation as did this of the guilt or innocence of these individuals, respect-  
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ing the conspiracy for which they were charged and tried. The result of this had been, that Mr. Tooke, Mr. Thelwall, and the other Gentlemen charged in the indictment, and whose lives his Majesty's ministers had unjustifiably, certainly abortively, attempted to take away, were declared by the juries to be not guilty of the conspiracy with which they stood charged. The verdicts of the juries clearly established one or other of these three things; either that no conspiracy had existed at all; or, if it did exist, that it was not a conspiracy amounting to treason; or lastly, whatever the nature of the conspiracy was, that the persons brought to trial were not guilty of it, and that it must have been carried on by individuals whom no person could point out. His Lordship remarked that the Learned Judge who presided at the trials had emphatically said, that, if there was a conspiracy, the members of the societies had neither numbers, zeal, nor money enough, to carry it into effect. His Lordship was therefore clearly of opinion, that the conspiracy which gave rise to the original suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act, that bulwark of the liberties of Englishmen, had been done away and disproved by the late trials, and the acquittals consequent thereon; and that being the case, his Lordship said, he was extremely surprised to hear the Noble Lord moving their Lordships to continue this suspension without producing any proof whatever that any new or other conspiracy existed.

The Earl said, he did not deny that there might be many persons in this kingdom who were discontented with the present government, as there were at all times, in all countries: some of them from their dislike of a monarchy; others from their love of innovation and change, &c.; and many, perhaps, from causes differing from either of these;—but no man could deny that a spirit of the warmest and most zealous loyalty and affection to his Majesty pervaded the great body of his Majesty's subjects: Never were more loyal addresses, or more fervent expressions of attachment to the King and Constitution known than at the present period. In former times, when matters were very differently situated, and appearances much more dangerous, no such strong measures had been resorted to by our ancestors, as the present ministers had made use of to possess themselves of exorbitant power, as in the cases of the Alien Bill, the Traiterous Correspondence Bill, and the Suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act. In the beginning of the reign of King William, when the departed or abdicated King was still alive and in arms, many hundreds of people were known, from the prejudice of long habits, from personal affection, and from other obvious causes, to be strongly attached to his interests, and even avowed this attachment; yet the

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*Habeas Corpus* Act was not then suspended, but our ancestors trusted to the excellence of the government, and the vigour and energy of the laws, for protection from danger, likely to result from the causes just stated in favour of the abdicated King and his family. The same in the beginning of the reign of Queen Anne, and in the reigns of George I. and II. Nor indeed had the *Habeas Corpus* Act been suspended, but in cases of threatened or actual invasion or rebellion.

His Lordship concluded with emphatically declaring, that he saw no reasonable ground whatever for a further suspension of the Act in question ; and therefore he would give his negative to the motion.

The Duke of Leeds assured their Lordships, that after the very ample manner in which he had delivered his sentiments on the passing the original Bill for the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act last year, he should not have troubled them again on the same subject, if it had not been for some part of what had fallen from his Noble Friend who had just sat down. He could not agree with the doctrine of his Noble Friend, that because the prisoners on the late trials were acquitted, the natural and fair deduction was, that no conspiracy had existed ; he was altogether of a different opinion. His Grace assured their Lordships, that he by no means intended to cast the least reflection on the juries who acquitted the persons on the late trials ; on the contrary, he was of opinion they had acted fairly and conscientiously, and that the verdict of "Not Guilty" was warranted by evidence, and strictly conformable to law. The acquittal of the persons tried, however, in his judgment, did not by any means prove that a conspiracy had not existed.

The Duke said, that the Committee appointed by their Lordships, of which he had the honour to have been one, had acted with the utmost care, deliberation, and attention in investigating the mass of papers which contained the correspondence of the several societies implicated in the charge of this conspiracy, and on the fullest conviction, after the most mature consideration, they had drawn up the Report, on the credit of which their Lordships had thought proper to pass the original Bill. His Grace declared, that he was not a little surprised to hear his Noble Friend say that the whole of the proceedings on the subject had been founded on delusion. All he could say upon that matter was, that if it was a delusion, it was a delusion so nearly resembling reality, that he was unable to distinguish the one from the other, for at this moment the whole of the plot appeared to be a reality in his mind, as much as it did when he sat in the Committee appointed by  
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their Lordships. With regard to the late trials, he would add, that if he had lived in the country, a total stranger to everything that was passing in the metropolis, except what he might see in the newspapers on the accounts of these trials, he would say, that from the very nature of the defence of these persons, he thought there did exist in this country the conspiracy alleged. The turn which public affairs had lately taken on the continent, the topographical situation of France at this time, the vast extent of coast she was in possession of, as well as the internal situation of this country, had rendered the Bill not only a proper measure of precaution, but also, under all the circumstances, just and highly necessary.

The Earl of Carlisle rose, to take notice of some extraordinary doctrine that had been advanced by his Noble Friend the Earl of Guildford.

The first that struck him, as utterly unsustainable in reason or in truth, was the following position, viz. *That all suspicion of traitorous conspiracy was done away by the late acquittals.* So little could the force of this proposition gain his conviction, that the very inverse of it seemed to be nearer the truth: For if the existence of a conspiracy had not been admitted, forming the basis and foundation of all the proceedings of the Court, there being no crime, of course there could be no criminal. The Court could not have remained sitting a moment; nor would the Jury have suffered any part of the fatigue and confinement, which the nation at large has reason to deplore they underwent. The admission of the existence of that conspiracy was as much a preliminary point, as the finding of a dead body, with marks of violence upon it, is necessary to establish the fact that a murder has been committed, and from thence to ground the inquiry after the perpetrators of the crime. He meant not, in the most distant manner, to reflect upon the soundness and justice of the late verdicts; but, submitting to them, he would go no further (because he believed they were not intended to convey more) than that those men, arraigned for the crimes for which they were brought to trial, had not committed those offences. But he could by no means submit to the outrageous conclusion, that, because those individuals were not proved to be the offenders, consequently there was no offence. His Lordship admitted, that such acquittal was a perfect legal washing away of all imputation, that such crime had been perpetrated by the accused, and the law held them to be innocent: The law in that, and in every case, can do no more. But there is a tribunal still behind, from which, on this side the grave, there is no appeal—the decision of the Public. It is the hand of the Public that sets the seal of

of honour or disgrace upon all human conduct; nor is that always directed by the sentence of the law. For what can be more false, than that an acquittal of Court, in all cases, restores the accused to society, immaculate, and without stain on his reputation? For instance, in the following case which happened at Bury, the falsehood of this modern doctrine will be easily manifested: A person, of the rank of a gentleman, and bred to the law, conceived the horrid design of killing a near relation, in order to possess himself of his fortunes: He, with an accomplice, way-laid this relation, failed in his attempt to kill, but left him for dead: He recovered of his wounds: The villain was indicted on the Coventry Act, and charged with the intention of maiming and defacing. To the surprise of the Court, he set up this horrid plea: "I did not, as all the evidence will shew, intend to maim; I meant to murder!" Now suppose, which luckily was not the case, that this plea had availed him? By this new doctrine, he would have retired from the bar perfectly clear and guiltless; one upon whom no imputation, without injustice, ought to have attached; and he, who should have doubted his innocence, would have been guilty of cruelty and oppression.

Another thing, which his Lordship conceived his Noble Friend to have said, was, that the conduct of ministers was unjustifiable, as their project in raising these alarms went to the endeavour of taking away the lives of innocent men. His trusted ears had deceived him; for, knowing the candour, the benevolence, and humanity of his Noble Friend, it was impossible for him to reconcile the sharpness of such an accusation with the fairness of mind and the gentleness of heart which he knew him to possess. For with what difficulties had such an accusation to encounter? In the first place, merely to divert the public attention, that any set of men should be found so depraved as such ministers must be; who should contrive so horrid a scheme;—that difficulty would meet him on the threshold. But if this was got over, the next that occurs is the acquiescence of many independent persons, in their character of Privy Councillors, to forward this notable expedient. But this also removed, another immediately arises—the conduct of the grand jury who found the bills: They must also take their share of guilt in advancing this detestable project, denying to them that conviction, arising from the proofs before them, that there had been commitment of crime, and that certain individuals were by them, from those proofs, believed to be the perpetrators. This was not all: Another formidable difficulty remained, after all these

were removed—the conduct of the petty jury, who did not act as if the case was perfectly clear, but retired to deliberate, and remained some time in deliberation. But he must again repeat, this great question is now before the Public: Many had opportunities of attending the trials; most of reading, if they chose, the proceedings of the Court; and it remains for them to decide, whether there were not the seeds of the greatest mischief industriously sown, which (yielding to the verdicts) had not reached maturity, nor arrived at that pitch of criminality which would have warranted a very different verdict;—or whether this scheme, involving the fortunes, reputation, and lives, of harmless and inoffensive men, in the utmost peril, was conceived by his Majesty's ministers, adopted by the Privy Council, advanced by the grand jury, till it came to its last stage, merely for the purpose of slinging a tub to the whale, and taking advantage of the national fears of internal danger, to render it more easy for those ministers to carry on measures inconsistent with the public welfare.

Here, said his Lordship, let the matter rest. As for the continuance of this partial suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Bill, in particular and specified cases, he should certainly vote for its continuance. When the Bill was consented to the last year, he was sufficiently convinced that the people of England were well served by their representatives, in arming the Executive Government with this temporary power, and that the House of Lords did its duty by the Public, in adopting the same measure for the general safety: Not being convinced that all the seeds of that mischief, though sleeping in the ground, were deprived of power to start up again, warmed and activity by that fostering care which had so industriously disseminated them, he thought that this was not yet the hour to relax that vigilance to which our safety may justly be attributed; nor to return that shield which the people of England had lent, and buckled on the executive arm of Government for their protection and defence.

The Earl of Warwick apologized for troubling their Lordships with his sentiments on the present occasion, but having given a silent vote when the Bill passed last year, he was induced to crave their Lordships indulgence, while he said a few words upon the subject. His Lordship owned, he was one of those who thought the *Habeas Corpus* Act an invaluable blessing, and that it ought never to be suspended but in cases of the most urgent necessity and evident danger; and that necessity, the Earl said, appeared to have existed in an eminent degree last year, and still continued to exist. It was, therefore, because

he saw just and necessary grounds for such a measure, that he should give the Bill before the House his support. He took occasion to speak of Opposition in general, as a matter highly honourable to those who took part in it, and of the utmost utility and advantage to the Public, when conducted on fair, manly, and patriotic principles. He had himself always been an admirer of such an Opposition, and, in the course of his life; had more than once joined in one, which had produced great good by their steadiness, their disinterested views, and their abilities. But wide indeed was his opinion of an Opposition founded on a different principle; an Opposition in which certain individuals appeared to be actuated by no other views than objects of faction, personal interest, or personal ambition. — Such an Opposition was to be detested as the curse of their country. He could not reconcile it to his mind that it was possible for an honest senator to come into an English House of Parliament, and echo the sentiments of a French demagogue. — Parties wishing for nothing but to indulge their own ambition, by obtaining to themselves power, he thought neither more nor less than a contemptible Opposition, and such an Opposition he always did and always should despise. He did not say this of the present Opposition as a body, for in that view he believed them to be honourable.

During this part of the Earl's speech, there was a cry of *Hear! hear!* On which his Lordship said, he would not shrink from his words; he had delivered his real sentiments.

His Lordship touched lightly on the war itself, but confessed that the subject had been fully discussed by men more competent to treat it properly than he pretended to be. After a few observations, he concluded with declaring that the motion should have his decided support.

The Earl of Guildford said, his Noble Friend had completely misconceived much of his argument; their Lordships would therefore admit, that it was necessary that he should set him to rights. With regard to the verdicts that had been given, he had said, that they established one of these three points: That no traiterous conspiracy existed at all; 2dly, If it did, that it was not a conspiracy amounting to treason; and lastly, Whatever the nature of the conspiracy was, that the persons brought to trial as the most active in it, were not guilty of the crime charged against them. In all or either of which cases, the Bill for suspending the *Habeas Corpus* Act did not in any way apply.

Thus much he had felt himself obliged, in justice to himself, to say in explanation, and he would have then sat down, had not a Noble Earl who spoke before (Lord Warwick), taken

the liberty to indulge himself in a severe censure against these Noble Lords with whom he had the honour to act, and which he would venture to say was wholly unmerited. He would appeal to every one of their Lordships, whether he and the Noble Lords near him had not uniformly expressed their honest indignation at the conduct of ministers from the commencement of the war, and strenuously opposed all the violent measures which they had continued in carrying it on, for their own interested purposes. He despised, in as strong terms as the Noble Earl, or any man could utter, the idea of opposition to Government, upon such base principles as the Noble Lord had insinuated—the desire of place, factious motives, or views of personal ambition. But he defied any man with the smallest colour of justice to accuse the Opposition with which he acted, of the first charge, because it could not be done with fairness or with truth; and as to faction, he would only say, that if a steady and uniform system of opposition to those ministers whose blunders and incapacity had exposed themselves to disgrace, and the country to a state of the greatest calamity, could with justice be called a factious Opposition, it was one which no man who conscientiously did his duty to his country, and disapproved of the unconstitutional manner in which they came into power, their obstinacy in persisting in a most ruinous conduct, and the shameful disasters that had necessarily attended such conduct, could possibly forego. His Lordship, in his reply to the insinuation thrown out by the Noble Earl, with great eloquence, great animation, and great energy, raised his voice much higher than we ever heard his Lordship speak. In fact, he met the insinuation with that degree of indignant contempt that he thought it called for.

*The Earl of Warwick* explained. Not being in the habit of public speaking, he might not, he said, have expressed himself in a manner sufficiently explicit; he was not, however, afraid to repeat that though he considered a strict watching over the conduct of ministers, as a very laudable principle of opposition, in times of danger he did not think it right to harass Government by opposition from any other principle. He had guardedly stated that he pointed his argument not against the present Opposition generally, and he begged the Noble Earl to believe him, when he declared, he entertained an high opinion of the Noble Earl's public and private character; but there might be individuals to whom he had reason to allude; he meant those who came forward as leaders of Opposition, without duly weighing the consequences of what they did, descending into minutiae, and broaching opinions that could answer no good purpose, but might produce infinite mischief; he adverted

ed, as an instance, to the opposition that day, and he disapproved of persons coming down with their pocket stuffed with papers in order to influence the debates of that House.

*The Earl of Lauderdale* said, it had been far from his intention that day to have deviated in the slightest manner from the great question before the House, but he should be wanting in duty to himself, to those with whom he acted, and to their Lordships collectively, were he to pass entirely unnoticed what had been said by the Noble Earl who spoke last. He agreed with the Noble Earl, in his ideas of what was a proper Opposition, and so he believed would every one of their Lordships; but he must contend that there never was a better founded, fairer, or more constitutional Opposition, than that to which the Noble Earl had so strangely wished to attribute improper motives. How such an idea could have come into his head, on this particular occasion, he was utterly at a loss to account; or why, that day, when such a measure as the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act was brought forward, and upon such frivolous grounds, those who opposed it were to be accused of ambitious views and love of office, he could not tell; for, surely, if ever there was a time when ambition of that sort, and savy of place, was out of the question, it must be, when the ministers had degraded the country, and brought it into its present disastrous situation—a situation in which no man of the least spirit or regard to his character would wish to take off any part of the heavy responsibility of ministers, and place it on his own shoulders. He was almost ashamed however to have taken up so much of their Lordships time, in replying to such futile and ill-applied observations, when a question of so much real magnitude and importance was before them.

With regard to the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act, he would persist in asserting, that no former instance could be produced, in the history of this country, since the Revolution, where it had been suspended without an absolute and pressing necessity, which not only had not been shewn, but was not even pretended to exist at this time, by those who had brought forward the measure. The Noble Secretary of State had contented himself with having recourse to the old exploded doctrines of plots and conspiracies—Conspiracies conjured up last year, since completely refuted, and once more brought forward to alarm the Public. He had expected, that, in the course of the discussion, he should have heard that some new plots and treasons, or some real traitors or conspirators, had been found out; but that was not insinuated to be the case. Much, the Earl observed, had been said of the effect of the verdicts of the juries; he wanted no such proofs to convince



vince him that traiterous conspiracies did not exist in this country; he was fully convinced of it from the first, and in his mind enough had come out upon the late trials to incline those who thought otherwise last year to change their opinions. His opinion of the evidence contained in the Report of last year, which formed the evidence on the trials, was the same as that delivered by a Noble and Learned Lord (Lord Thurlow) in his place at that time, and whose absence he regretted now, because probably he would have repeated it. It was that great man's opinion that, in the proceedings of the societies and the several documents and papers stated in the Report, there was much of sedition, but nothing that amounted to treason. He contended, that, considering all the opportunities that ministers had of superior information, the great legal assistance they must have had, and the impossibility that they and the very able and powerful bar, who investigated these matters for them, could wish to betray one another and the country; it was not probable that they would have brought to trial as the chief conspirators persons who they knew were not so; and that being the case, it followed that those persons being acquitted, and no other conspirators known, the conspiracy, if it did exist, must be what it had been called—a conspiracy without conspirators. With regard to the Bill then before the House, it held out a fallacy to the Public; the preamble stated the positive existence of a traiterous conspiracy, founded upon the evidence of those papers and documents, not one of which had been proved to amount to sufficient evidence of guilt to establish it against those who had signed and taken part in them: On the strength which should be laid upon the acquittals he had no hesitation in stating, that he would certainly prefer the verdict of a jury deciding upon oath, after a full investigation of the case submitted to them, to their Lordships Report, drawn up from papers laid before them by ministers; and so must every man, except their Lordships, who unaccountably assumed to themselves a superior degree of political integrity to the other House, when questions connected with politics came before them. The Noble Secretary of State must agree with him in this, when he had, in support of his argument, the authority of a person and measure which he must certainly respect. The person whose authority he rested on was no other than the Noble Earl's father, and the measure the Act commonly called "Mr. Grenville's Act" to determine Contested Elections, the ground of which was, that experience had proved it to be impossible to obtain a fair decision on such political questions, except by putting the Members of the Committee upon oath. He deprecated the doctrine

trino that a fair acquittal did not completely do away every degree of suspicion; and quoted the authority of Lord Chief Justice Eyre in his charge to the grand jury, and read the passage on which he relied for the validity of his arguments. A Noble Earl had quoted the *Bury* case to shew that an acquittal did not amount to a complete purgation of moral guilt. He would quote another that happened, he believed, in the same county, to prove what the opinion of the Bench was upon a verdict of acquittal. The names were *Watson* versus *Henry*; the action was brought for perjury, but that part of the evidence omitted which was supposed to constitute the perjury, a verdict was found for the defendant; *Watson*, not satisfied, afterwards published an advertisement reflecting on the others and stated, that though he had been legally acquitted, there was still great presumption of his guilt. Upon an action for damages brought for this advertisement, Judge Ashurst considered it as an aggravation, and stated it to be highly criminal and proceeding upon a base and unjustifiable system of poisoning malice. He did not say that those who pretended to entertain suspicions against the acquitted persons, were liable of persisting in malice; he merely stated the Learned Judge's opinion on that case; he had quoted it, to shew what Judges themselves thought of any imputation of the innocence of a person who had been acquitted by the verdict of a jury. Nothing, he contended, had been proved against the persons cited, but what could be legally proved against persons in that and the other House of Parliament, viz. a desire to bring about a reform in Parliament. To effect which legal and constitutional purpose, several Noble Lords, whom he then saw, had committed themselves by attending public meetings; subscribing their proceedings, &c. &c. Having put this pointedly, the Earl took occasion to inform their Lordships that he had been alluded to in another place, where he could not answer for himself, and therefore, he said, he would take that opportunity of publicly setting the matter to rights. It had been said, that what he had stated in a publication lately\*, was not accurate on the subject of persons now in Administration, taking an active part in these proceedings for reform. Wherever he had an opportunity of answering, he would say what he did then, that he was ready to give perfect and legal proof that what he had stated was upon grounds apparently accurate. Lord Lauderdale explained that passage in his pamphlet in which he had noticed the expression, "Perish Commerce, live the Constitution;" and accounted for having been led in his

\* Letters to the Peers of Scotland, by the Earl of Lauderdale.

law. Upon the fullest examination which the Council so composed could give the subject, it appeared to them that there did exist a conspiracy of a dangerous nature in this country.

The business was after that investigated by Committees of both Houses of Parliament; and they having perused all the written documents upon this subject, concurred in the same opinion.—The question was then referred to the consideration of a grand jury; and his Lordship begged the House to recollect that the evidence of the existence of the conspiracy, viz. the written documents, which was submitted to the grand jury, was very nearly the same with that afterwards laid before the petit jury.—The bills were found by the grand jury, which was a decisive proof that they believed in the existence of the conspiracy, for they could not otherwise have found the bills.

Here then was a concurrence of opinion of the Privy Council, the Houses of Lords and Commons, and a grand jury, all agreeing as to the fact of the existence of the conspiracy, which he conceived to be a very strong authority upon the subject: But how did it appear that the petit jury differed from them in their opinion of the conspiracy? how did it appear that their verdict was founded upon their disbelieving its existence? No one fact appeared to justify such an idea; on the contrary, the more rational and probable opinion was, that the juries were satisfied of the existence of the conspiracy, though the guilt of the parties accused had not been made out clearly to their satisfaction.

Another proposition stated, and from which he must also dissent, his Lordship said, was, that the acquittal of the jury purged the character of the person tried of the imputation of moral guilt. He felt as much veneration as any man for the institution of the trial by jury; but he conceived it no disrespect either to the institution itself, or to any particular jury, to say, that a verdict of *Not Guilty* was not necessarily a proof of the entire innocence of the person acquitted. The experience of every day proved the contrary; no Noble Lord would undertake to say, that every person acquitted during the year at the Old Bailey was thereby wholly purged from all imputation of moral guilt, or that the jury who acquitted him founded their verdict upon their being satisfied of the perfect innocence of the party accused: On the contrary, it was notorious that many who were tried and acquitted, were conceived to be guilty by the jury and the court, though, in point of strict legal form, they could not be convicted.

But it had been said, Can there be a conspiracy without a conspirator?—No! undoubtedly not: But there might exist  
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a conspiracy, though legal proof of guilt against an individual could not be brought.—His Lordship adverted to the avowed objects of the different societies, and contended they were of a nature that every man must agree ought to excite and call forth all the vigilance of the Executive Government. The pretext that their plans were confined to the object of a reform in Parliament, was one of the most absurd assertions he had ever heard—What had their addresses to the Jacobin Club or to the Convention of France to do with reform in Parliament? Nay, as if they had been determined to express in the most clear manner their ideas of government, they never once addressed the National Convention while there was a King upon the throne, though a nominal one; then they addressed the Jacobin Club; but the moment the King was deposed, the societies in England thought the Convention a fit body for them to correspond with. These were facts which in his mind admitted but of one interpretation.

Upon the whole, he thought ministers had done their duty in taking the steps they had pursued, and he should give them his entire support to this measure.

*The Duke of Portland* said, that having been alluded to by a Noble Earl (Lord Lauderdale), as a supporter of Parliamentary reform, he thought it necessary to state, he had always resisted and reprobated that doctrine, whenever it had been brought forward, and for the truth of this, he appealed to all who knew him. He felt it the more incumbent upon him to state his sentiments on this subject, because he understood that in a work published by the same Noble Lord, he had been mentioned among the number of those, who in the year 1780 supported the cause of reform—the book itself he never had read, and, he believed, he never should read it. He admitted at the same time that he had been a supporter of an economical reform, a reform of the abuses of Government. His Grace instanced one of the Acts of Parliament that had passed for excluding contractors and excisemen from sitting in the House of Commons, as a proof of the sort of reform to which he pointed, and that, he said, afforded a clear proof of the distinct manner in which he had directed his public conduct, and could not be confounded, by any rational man, with the modern idea of a sweeping Parliamentary reform.

*Earl Spencer* said, it was not his intention to have taken any part in the debate, but that the pointed manner, in which a Noble Earl (Lord Lauderdale) had alluded to certain Noble Lords then present, who had stood forward at public meetings in the year 1780, at which Parliamentary reform had been one of the objects in agitation, made it necessary for him,

as it had done for the Noble Duke, to stand forward, and refute the insinuation, that he had ever been an avowed advocate for Parliamentary reform. In the first place, he thought it a piece of justice due from him to the Noble Duke, to declare that to his knowledge the Noble Duke never had been friendly to the idea of a Parliamentary reform. With regard to himself, he had no difficulty in confessing, that when a young man, and not much versed in political life, he had been induced to be present at some popular meetings; but he found among the members of such meetings such a variety of different and indeed absurd plans of reform contended for by different persons, some extravagant in the highest degree, and others going to much greater lengths than he thought it either wise or prudent to go, that he had soon withdrawn himself from all such meetings. But admitting for the sake of argument, what was by no means the fact, that all the Noble Lords and Gentlemen, who assembled on various occasions in 1780 to agitate, among other questions, that of Parliamentary reform, he must contend, that the question of a reform of Parliament in 1780, and the question of a reform in 1792, 1793, 1794, and 1795, were distinct questions, questions different in object, and exceedingly different indeed in the proposed means of attaining their object. The object of the Parliamentary reformists in the year 1780 was the reform of certain abuses then existing in the House of Commons, and which were pointed out at the time. Some of them had since been brought about. But could their objects be compared with the objects of those who affected to stand for Parliamentary reform in these times? Did they wish to overturn the constitution, new-model the government, and make laws for themselves separate and distinct from the laws enacted by the three branches of the Legislature? No man would dare impute to them any such dangerous and unconstitutional designs. It was therefore, his Lordship said, extremely unfair, and in the highest degree unjust, to impute to those who attended the popular meetings in 1780, and might wish for the reform of a few existing abuses at that time, the wild, extravagant, and visionary theories avowed by modern reformers. With regard to what a Noble Earl (Lord Guildford) had said with so much warmth of the honourable motives of the Noble Lords who at present opposed the measures of his Majesty's ministers, he was far from imputing to those Noble Lords any improper motives whatever; he believed their minds to be pure and honourable, but he hoped they would give him and those Noble Lords, who had recently thought proper to take a share in the responsibility of ministers, equal credit for their motives. He perfectly well

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knew, that it would be more for his personal ease, if he had remained out of office; and it would also have been more agreeable to many persons for whom he entertained a very sincere regard and esteem; but conceiving the season to be arrived when every impulse of private feeling ought to be sacrificed to a sense of public duty, he had stepped forward to give every possible support to the salvation of the country and the preservation of its constitution.

*The Earl of Lauderdale* said, that not having been in public life at the period alluded to by the Noble Duke, he had recourse to the best and most authentic records, from which the Noble Duke must be considered as a supporter of Parliamentary reform; if he was to be judged upon the same rules of evidence as *Horne Tooke*, or any other man, in consequence of having not only attended, but taken part in the proceedings of societies distinctly avowing that object. As to the Noble Duke not having read his book, having once esteemed him as a political character, and still continuing to esteem him as a private man, he was glad that the Noble Duke had not read the criticisms which a sense of public duty had compelled him to make upon his recent conduct. In corroboration of what he had stated in his former speech, and in his printed letters, his Lordship said, when he took upon himself either to assert a fact in print, or to allude to it in that House, he always did so from the best possible authority that he could meet with. As a proof that he had not done so idly, and altogether without reason in his allusion to Noble Lords who had in 1780 appeared to be advocates for Parliamentary reform, he begged leave to read from a publication of that day, the account of the proceedings of several meetings held to agitate that among other questions, and likewise the names of the persons present at those meetings. His Lordship read various of these papers from the *Remembrancer*, or some other publication of the kind, in which they had appeared at the time, and had never been contradicted. Among the names present at such meetings were those of the Duke of Portland, Earl Spencer, and other Noblemen then in opposition to the Administration of the day (*Lord North's*). With respect to the Noble Earl who spoke last, *Lord Lauderdale* said, he did not impute any sinister intentions to any Noble Lord, much less to the Noble Earl who had lately spoken. If he had a particular consolation in the loss of his support, it was in the idea that he was well qualified to inform his new friends how little he (*Lord Lauderdale*) was actuated by prospects of place or power, and how much more eager he was in the support of his principles and his party, in proportion as these were more remote.

*The Earl of Guildford* said, that he had not imputed perverse motives to any Noble Lord: He had only repelled, with a degree of warmth which he must ever feel, the reprehensions that appeared to him to have been meant as an attack on all those Noble Lords, who, like himself, continued to oppose the present disastrous war, and the measures of ministers, which had brought the country into so dangerous and unfortunate a situation. It had been far from his idea to impute improper motives to the Noble Earl who had just sat down.

*Lord Viscount Sydney* said, he could bear his testimony to the assertions of the Noble Duke, that he had never been an advocate for Parliamentary reform. He himself, as he once before informed their Lordships, had attended one or two of the public meetings that took place in the year 1780, when the reform of abuses in Parliament was the subject of consideration; and among others, the reform of Parliament itself, by an alteration of the number and election of representatives. All through his political life he had been an enemy to any change of that kind, and he had on a former night stated, that he found a violent contradiction of opinion prevailed on that head, among those present at the popular meetings to which he alluded; some of their projects were so extravagant, some so absurd, and almost all of them in the highest degree impracticable; that he had retired in disgust: But no one of all of them went the length that the reformists of the present day had ventured to do; and he sincerely believed, that no advocate for the reform of Parliament agitated in the year 1780, would have consented to a doctrine of reform that had for its immediate object, a subversion of the constitution and government of the country.

With regard to the verdicts of the juries who were lately sworn to try the indictments for high treason at the Old Bailey, he was astonished that any one reasonable man could for a moment maintain, that a verdict of "Not Guilty" purged the prisoner from all suspicion either of moral guilt, or even, in many cases, of the specific crime for which he had been tried. It certainly saved him from punishment for that offence, and made him as free a man respecting it, as if he had never been indicted; but he believed there was not a single session passed, that several prisoners were not acquitted, either from flaws in the indictment, from want of sufficient proof, from the doubtful or improper evidence set up against them, or for some one or other of those obvious reasons that so frequently occur in the course of the trials at the Old Bailey, to protract the fate of atrocious criminals, and suffer them to exist for a session or two longer. An instance illustrative

illustrative of this had occurred within his own knowledge, in the county in which he resided. A highwayman was apprehended on a charge of robbing a person of his money and his watch on the road, and the watch was produced by a witness on the trial at Maidstone, and sworn to by the prosecutor. An ingenious counsel, who was employed to defend the prisoner, perceiving there was no other witness against him as to the fact but one, who happened to be what is termed a runner at one of the offices of the public magistrates, asked the witness, what he was to receive for his testimony? The witness was embarrassed, but said, with hesitation, that "he did not know that he was to receive any thing." The counsel then asked, whether there was not a reward by Act of Parliament for apprehending a highwayman? The witness said, "Yes, he knew that." "Then pray, Sir," said the counsel, "what is the amount of the reward?"—"Forty pounds," immediately replied the witness. The counsel then addressed himself, with great art, to the jury, and appealing to their passions, asked if they could conscientiously agree to take away the life of a fellow-creature on the testimony of such a witness? a runner to a public office, who, when first asked what he was to have for his evidence, said, "he could not tell, he did not know that he was to have any thing:" Then, when asked if he did not know that there was a Parliamentary reward for apprehending a highwayman, confessed that he did; and upon a third question, was able to state the precise sum. The appeal had its effect—the prisoner was acquitted; though neither the court, the jury, nor any man present, had a doubt but that the prisoner committed the robbery, and that the witness had been correct in every fact that he had stated. And yet, the case fully considered, every man must agree that the jury were not to blame, as the convicting a prisoner on such evidence of a capital offence, would have established a most dangerous precedent.

After animadverting on this anecdote, and shewing how immediately it applied to the matter in question, his Lordship said, it was high time to bring back the House to the question they had so long lost sight of, namely, the necessity of strong measures to repress the new doctrines that have been lately preached, and avert the dangers with which they threaten the constitution.

To have a proper sense of the dangers of those doctrines, his Lordship said, "let us look abroad, my Lords, to those countries where they have been introduced—let us look to the present situation of Geneva, which I saw in my youth, and then considered as one of the most happy, the most free, and the



the most blessed countries in Europe." His Lordship enlarged with great feeling, and at some length, upon the late revolution in Geneva, for the particulars of which he referred the House to a most interesting pamphlet just published\*, which he recommended to the serious reading, not only of all their Lordships, but of every man who wished to know from history itself, the nature of the new doctrines, their consequences, and the means by which they are brought into action. His Lordship read the following passage from the preface :

" In so short a space of time as eighteen months, did the revolutionary pestilence reduce the once happy and flourishing Geneva, to a state of anarchy, misery, and depopulation, of which modern history affords no other example. And let not the people of this country forget, that the first symptom of the contagion was the adoption and use of the term *Citizens* ; from the familiar establishment of that term, it proceeded to the right of *universal suffrage*, which was soon followed by the meeting of a *National Convention*, as the Convention was succeeded by the erection of a *Revolutionary Tribunal*, which, after suspending the actual government of the country, and plundering, banishing, or putting to death, every man of property or principle within its reach, has at length established a system of despotism, whose wanton tyranny and unprovoked cruelties, as completely refute the assertion, that the barbarities perpetrated in *France* are to be imputed solely to the combination formed against her, as the share taken by that power in the petty revolution of *Geneva*, exposes the impudent hypocrisy of the pretence, that she never interfered in the domestic concerns of other nations."

It was to save this country from similar scenes of horror, that made him an advocate to strengthen the hands of ministers with strong powers, and as he had no doubt that the passing of this Bill would be an effectual means of crushing that conspiracy, which evidently did exist, Lord Sydney said, he should give the Bill his support.

Lord Hay (Earl of Kinnoul) spoke strongly in support of the Bill then under consideration. He spoke of the meritorious conduct of the Committee appointed by their Lordships last session, who had spared no pains to investigate the matter referred to them fully and fairly, and whose Report had at the time convinced their Lordships of the existence of the alleged conspiracy ; and nothing, he conceived, that

\* D'Ivernois's Account of the Revolution at Geneva.

could be inferred from what had passed upon the late trials, had at all proved the non-existence of the conspiracy. The Earl said, that from the commencement of the war, he had thought it his duty to support his Majesty's ministers; that the more dangerous appearances were from the unfortunate reverses and disasters of the last campaign, and the more arduous the state of affairs, the more necessary it appeared to him, that every one of their Lordships should assist in strengthening the arm of the Executive Government, to enable ministers to meet the difficulty of the crisis with necessary energy and vigour. On that ground, and thinking as he did, that it was necessary at such a moment to guard as much as possible against the machinations of domestic incendiaries and promoters of anarchy and sedition, he should give his vote in support of the Bill.

*The Duke of Bedford* said, he could not give a silent vote on such an occasion as the present. In his opinion, ministers, instead of presuming confidently to demand the renewal of the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act, ought to come forward with penitence and contrition, not only for the delusion they had practised on the people by prevailing upon Parliament to pass the Bill of last year upon grounds which had since been proved to be wholly imaginary and false; but for their numberless blunders and impolitic measures, which had brought the country into the present unfortunate and calamitous situation. His Grace reprobated in strong and marking language, the insinuating that a verdict of a British jury was not decisive of a prisoner's innocence or guilt. It was a doctrine that struck immediately at that important privilege of British subjects, trial by jury. It was a blow aimed at national liberty, and could only be attempted to answer some improper end or other. He had last year been of opinion, that all the stories of existing conspiracies were mere idle tales, fabricated with intent to alarm the minds of the people, and enable ministers the better to perpetrate their arbitrary designs, and carry their ill-judged and mischievous measures into execution. If he thought so then, how much more did he now think, that all such ideas of plots and conspiracies were wholly groundless, after what had passed on the late trials! He thought that ministers had much to answer for, on the score of having poisoned the Royal ear, and infused doubts into his Majesty's mind, of the loyalty and affection of his subjects, at a period when, perhaps, stronger proofs of loyalty and affection to his Majesty's person and government had never been manifested. He could safely lay his hand on his heart, and confidently declare, that he was convinced that

his countrymen neither had meditated, nor been guilty of any machinations, whatever, like those imputed to them. His Grace scouted the imputation of being actuated by factious motives, or motives of personal ambition or interest, which a Noble Earl had endeavoured to fix on the Noble Lords who joined with him in opposing the impolitic measures of his Majesty's ministers. If there was no other consideration to destroy the influence of such base and scandalous motives, considerations of prudence and personal safety would sufficiently repress their operation; for who but a madman would rashly desire to share, at such a crisis, in the heavy and dangerous responsibility which ministers had incurred by measures which had brought the country to the verge of ruin? His Grace concluded an able and eloquent speech against the Bill, with reminding the House, that they were placed as a barrier between democracy and despotism; that they were not only the guardians of the rights of the Throne, but of the privileges of the People; and that they ought equally to beware how they permitted themselves either to trample upon the one, or to trifle with the other.

*The Marquis of Lansdown* professed his intention not to have said one word on the subject before their Lordships, but to have given a silent vote, and reserved any little force of argument he might possess, for the great and infinitely more important question, whether we were to be obliged by ministers to continue the war to the utter ruin of the country, or to avert the danger on the precipice of which we stood, by timely and immediate measures for accelerating the approach of peace? The turn the debate had taken, however, rendered it absolutely impossible for him not to trouble their Lordships with a few observations; but he would compress what he had to say as much as possible. Sorry indeed was he to see, that in a moment so perilous as the present, instead of measures being brought forward, calculated to conciliate the minds of the people, to win their confidence, and unite them in the support of Government, measures of an opposite nature, measures tending to irritate the public mind, and provoke their resistance by forcing them to feel unnecessary oppression, were to be persisted in. The Noble Duke had naturally expressed his surprise, that ministers did not come forward with penitence and contrition for their past errors. He was not quite so young a man as the Noble Duke, and therefore he did not expect from ministers what was rarely to be met with from any part of mankind—a frank confession of their indiscretions, their blunders, and their folly. He could besides inform the Noble Duke, that penitence and power were seldom companions,

With regard to the immediate subject before the House, the *Habeas Corpus* was one of the best props of the liberties of England, one of the most solid supports on which they rested; every attempt therefore to suspend so important an Act, for ever so short a time, must necessarily excite the jealousy of every Englishman, from a consciousness that the *Habeas Corpus* was the land-mark of freedom, the grand distinguishing feature between arbitrary arrest and legal confinement. It had been said, that an acquittal only prevented a man from being tried again. This doctrine was subversive of every idea he had formed of the law of England—The civil law, the Roman law, and the old French law, all had distinctions in their mode of acquitting; but the English law, disdaining such idle distinctions, said, that a man should be pronounced either guilty or innocent. In the Roman usages of law with regard to prisoners, the different modes were, condemnation, absolution, or *non liquet*. In France, and other despotic places on the Continent, it was condemnation, waiting for farther information of evidence—and hence perpetual imprisonment, or perchance acquittal. But here our glory was, that a man might demand his own trial, the cause and process of his accusation; and hence he was acquitted or condemned at once. He had read very early in life the excellent book of Chancellor Fortescue, dedicated to the Prince of Wales, in which it is stated, that liberty is a property of which we ought to be extremely jealous; in losing a particle, by little and little the whole may be at last destroyed.

When the Bill of suspension passed last year, he thought it had been proposed to Parliament by ministers, as a vindication of their own conduct in creating alarms and apprehensions, which they must know to be wholly groundless as to any real cause, and that when it had sufficiently answered their purpose, it would be suffered to die a natural death. He lamented, from what had passed that day, that he was forced to understand ministers had more scenes of the same nature to present to the Public, more delusions to play off, notwithstanding that the fallacy of their former attempt had been so completely detected, and the whole of the fiction so fully exposed. Much had been said in the course of the debate, of the lemnity of the investigation that had been instituted in

sequence of the message which ministers had put into his Majesty's mouth, on the subject of plots and conspiracies great stress had been laid on the zeal, the diligence, and attention of the Committees of both Houses of Parliament to whom the papers brought down by ministers had been referred, and upon the Reports that had been presented to that House in consequence. No man, his Lordship said, could go farther than he was from meaning to shew the smallest disrespect to the Committee appointed by that House to investigate the subject in question. He gave them credit for having acted with the utmost circumspection and the utmost assiduity, in short, for having done their duty completely; but if he was obliged to decide between the weight of a verdict of a jury and the weight of the Report of any Parliamentary Committee, he would not hesitate a single moment to pronounce that the verdict of a jury of plain, honest, and impartial men acting upon their oaths, ought to outweigh fifty Reports of Committees of either House, fifty resolutions, or fifty Parliamentary proceedings of any nature whatsoever. Their Lordships, the Marquis said, could not but recollect the strong, but certainly not the most courteous opinion of a Noble Peer, now no more, delivered in an inferior court of judicature to that of their Lordships. The Noble Lord had said, that "he would pay no more regard to the resolution of a House of Parliament in a court of justice, than to a resolution of a club or company of drunken porters." The expression was undoubtedly coarse and indelicate, but would any one of their Lordships take upon him to say, that it was not well founded? If then the resolutions of Parliament were liable to be treated with so little respect in other places, why was an attempt made to set them up in opposition to the verdict of a jury, on which the property, the personal safety, and even the existence, of every man in the kingdom depended?

For his part he never had believed, much less did he now believe, that any such conspiracy against the King and his government existed. He did not pretend to know as much as ministers upon that point; it was not possible for him to know as much, because he had not the same means of information; but he took it for granted, that if ministers could not, with all their power and vigilance, with all their wishes to convict, and all the assistance they had from professional men of the highest authority, obtain a verdict in a single instance, the only reason could be, that after the most patient, solemn, and impartial investigation, that perhaps ever occupied the time and attention of a court and jury, there were no sufficient grounds for supposing that a conspiracy had ever been formed,

that those Gentlemen who had been apprehended and put upon their trial, after many months tedious confinement, had any share in it. If then there had existed no such conspiracy, in God's name to what purpose were ministers about to sow the seeds of new alarms and new apprehensions, when the moment of immediate defence of the country was arrived, and called for all the union and all the energy of the people? He heartily wished the people would rouse to a true sense of the public danger. Much of the mischief that had happened abroad, had its origin in the dumb and sullen spirit of discontent of the people. Such a silent despondency, when opportunity offered for action, was more to be dreaded than the loud active voice of complaint. In the latter case, timely cure might be administered, hope might be kept alive, and confidence recovered. In the former, remedy would come too late, desperation would bear down all before it, as it had done in France, and relief would be aimed at amidst the chaos of confusion, anarchy, and misrule of the moment; marked with all the horrid features, that were, at every period of history, to be traced in a violent convulsion, occasioned by an intemperate and enthusiastic struggle for freedom on the one hand, and an anxious ambition to seize the moment that such a convulsion afforded of grasping power, and maintaining it in possession at all hazards on the other.

With respect to certain allusions that had been made as to the motives of Noble Lords, who had uniformly acted in opposition to the war, and all the pernicious measures that ministers had brought forward to encourage and excite the House to persist in it; he knew not who the individuals were to whom the insinuation was meant to apply, but let it come from whence it might, it would meet only his contempt. He flattered himself he might safely appeal to both sides of the House, whether every part of the insinuation that had been so loosely thrown out, if intended to apply to him, had not been contradicted by the uniform tenor of his life?

The Lord Chancellor left the woollack in order to bring back their Lordships minds to a true understanding of the nature and extent of the Bill, which in the course of the debate had been misconceived, and under the misconception had been argued and discussed most erroneously. The Bill was improperly termed a suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act, when in fact and in truth, it was no such thing; it gave ministers no such alarming powers as it had been contended it them, nor did it abridge or circumscribe the liberty of the subject in the smallest degree, excepting only in the single instance where treason, or treasonable practices, were suspected.

And

And would any man in his senses contend, that in a moment like the present, when danger of the most uncommon degree pressed upon us, when, by the unfortunate chance of war, and the unforeseen rigour of the season, we had the enemy at our door; it was not wise and prudent, nay absolutely necessary for ministers, whose immediate duty it was to watch over the public interests, to take every possible precaution against the probable danger of private and internal enemies, when we had to face a foe at hand? Their Lordships would all recollect, that a Noble and Learned Lord, whose absence he sincerely regretted, and still more the cause of it, had, last year, pointed out to them the vulgar error of calling the present Bill, and all preceding Bills of a similar nature, a suspension of the *Habeas Corpus* Act. Undoubtedly it had not hitherto had, nor would it have in future, any such effect.

Some Noble Lords in the course of the debate had accused ministers of a desire to keep in their hands the extraordinary power, which it had been said this Bill gave them. The Bill gave ministers no such extraordinary power as had been imputed to it, but it imposed upon them a most painful duty, and attached a degree of responsibility, which every prudent man must be extremely anxious to avoid, if he was capable of distinguishing between what was an object to be desired, and an object to be shunned. The sole operation of the Bill was, to enable ministers to detain persons in custody who had been apprehended on suspicion of treasonable practices, till a reasonable time should be allowed to prepare the evidence; which, in such cases, must be of a complicated nature and difficult to arrange: And if the Bill did not pass, persons so circumstanced as he had described, might force on their trials before it was possible for Government to be ready to come forward with all their proofs in support of the charge. In every other respect, ministers were to the full, and indeed still more responsible than before. They had no more authority in consequence of its passing than any other magistrate, they were answerable to Parliament for the proper use of this power, and they were responsible to the individuals by the law of the country.

Much had been said as to the effect of a verdict of *Not Guilty*—The Lord Chancellor said, he would not trouble their Lordships by attempting to prove that which must be clear to every man of common sense, viz. that an acquittal was not always a clear proof of the innocence of the party. He would only remark, that if that were once laid down as a principle, the consequences would be bad indeed; if every verdict of *Not Guilty* was a direct proof of the moral innocence

presence of the party accused, then the reverse of the proposition must be true, and every verdict of Guilty must be taken, in every case, without exception, as irrefragable proof of the guilt of the prisoner.

No man who had filled the character of a judge, had not occasionally recommended persons to mercy who had been convicted, upon the ground of their total innocence; therefore if the proposition were once laid down broadly, and taken as equally binding each way, it would be productive of consequences very injurious to humanity. He must therefore repeat, that he wished their Lordships to reflect on the possible consequence of the doctrine, that the verdict of a jury could not be reviewed or deliberated upon; what would then become of men who might be found guilty by mistake, or by false evidence, or any other circumstance which might attend a trial? The person convicted of a capital offence could not be pardoned by the Crown; for if the verdict was to be considered at all events perfect, it must be absolute on the unfavourable, as well as on the favourable side. No person who had ever attended the circuit, or who had looked to the Recorder's report, would agree to that, because it tended to deprive many unfortunate persons of the mercy of the Crown. The only legal effect of any verdict was, that a person acquitted should not be tried again upon the same charge, but should be restored to his former rights.

With regard to the conspiracies stated in the Report of their Lordships Committee last year to exist, he had the honour of having been a member of that Committee, and he had also been present on other occasions, where the subject had been investigated with the most studious attention and care; he neither then, nor at the present moment, entertained the smallest doubt of the real existence of a most dangerous conspiracy, which the Noble Marquis had chosen to treat as a fiction, a matter merely that was imaginary, called forth to answer the temporary purposes of ministers. The Noble Duke had likewise thought proper to concur in the same opinion. The Noble Duke, on whom fortune had lavished her choicest gifts, and to whom nature had been so far more partial, that if he were stripped of all the advantages of fortune, which he so bountifully enjoyed, he was happy to see would be sufficiently rich in talents and abilities, to stand forward as a shining example of superiority and pre-eminence; he had declared that he apprehended no danger. He could not impute this to the Noble Duke's magnanimity and generous feelings so peculiar to the bosoms of youth of enlarged understandings, which made them rise superior to the ordinary sense



sense of danger felt by other men, who by age were taught more caution and a greater apprehension of approaching danger. Looking at the crisis with more fear of its pressing on-wards, he could not but feel somewhat more of alarm, and be anxious for somewhat more of precaution than the Noble Duke thought necessary; and he begged to call their Lordships attention for a very few moments to the system which had prevailed in France, meaning to leave it entirely to their Lordships to decide for themselves, whether there was or was not reason to apprehend a danger, from every attempt to introduce the same system, and the principles on which it was founded, into this country.

His Lordship said, that the majority of the people of the country was most undoubtedly loyal, and it was to secure that loyalty from the seduction of wicked and designing machinations that the Bill had been brought in. When he considered the plans which had been laid by a wicked and mistaken few, the relative situation of the country, the principles propagated in France, which had led the way to level and destroy all order, all law, religion, and the well-being of every thing dear to man, he did not think that he could be too guarded, circumspect, and vigilant, for the internal welfare of the country. From the information he had been able to collect, he was assured that a conspiracy had been engendered, born, nurtured, and in full growth, ready to rear its head when the machine could be once mounted, and that the correspondence, committees, partitions, and re-partitions of the different clubs, societies, &c. had given the fullest testimony of the truth of his assertions. In this part of his speech, the Lord Chancellor recapitulated all the leading transactions that had taken place in France, which ought in reason to be considered as likely to prove dangerous in this country, if propagated with the industry and enthusiasm that were known to be the characteristic of the agents of the French Convention.

His Lordship took a cursory view of the state of affairs at the periods in which the *Habeas Corpus* Act had formerly been suspended, and compared the danger of those times with the present, proving how infinitely more critical and alarming the present period was. He mentioned the proceedings in Lancashire, in consequence of the apprehension of certain persons on account of the Assassination Plot in the reign of King William, and stated what had been deemed advisable.

Speaking of the respect due to Parliamentary Committees and their Reports, he said, no man, at least no one of their Lordships, he presumed, would contend that they were not

entitled to great weight. It was true that a late Noble Lord had treated the resolutions somewhat cavalierly in a different place. The expression he had used on the occasion was certainly homely, but perhaps on that very account it had made a greater impression than if it had been more civil and polished; but its amount was no more than what every man who knew any thing of the constitution must admit, *viz.* that the resolutions of either House of Parliament were not equal in effect or authority to an Act of the Legislature. Much, however, was to be allowed for the place in which the opinion was delivered, the circumstances that called for it, and the effect it was meant to produce at the moment.

Having put this matter in its true point of view, the Lord Chancellor briefly recapitulated the heads of his argument, and concluded a speech of singular perspicuity and force of reasoning, with declaring, that the Bill then before their Lordships was a measure important to the national security, and therefore indispenfibly necessary to be passed.

Lord Auckland said, that without meaning any disrespect either to the House or to the several Noble Lords who had spoken in the debate, he might with the utmost strictness of truth assert, that, with an exception of the last speech, nine tenths of all that had been brought forward had no connexion, in any direct line of reasoning, with the question, "whether the Bill ought or ought not to pass." He would not imitate a practice which he reprobated, and which he thought ill suited to the momentous and urgent circumstances of the country. He would state, in the fewest words possible, the grounds of his opinion that the Bill ought to pass. He did not rest that opinion on any consideration resulting from the late trials at the Old Bailey. With respect, however, to those trials, he concurred with those who thought that it was no proof, nor even a fair presumption, that treasons had not been committed, because the law had not been effectually applied to bring any traitor to justice. Be that as it might; if there had been no inquiry before the Privy Council, though he could not erase from his memory the alarming truths brought to light by that inquiry; if there had been no Committees of the two Houses on the subject, though he could not forget the convincing Reports made by those Committees; still he should think that there were ample motives for passing the Bill in question. He rested that opinion upon the admission made by all the Noble Lords who had spoken on either side; by some, in express terms; by others, impliedly; that there prevail through the kingdom, amidst all its loyalty,

and amidst all the blessings with which that loyalty is rewarded, a tendency to disaffection, a spirit of sedition, and a love of wild innovation, in the minds of many individuals. With such symptoms at home, in a moment of extreme danger from abroad, in a moment when the storm was collecting, and rolling towards these kingdoms with appearances so menacing that he would not permit himself to describe them;— he could not, in such a moment, agree with the Noble Marquis (Lord Lansdown), that it would be wise to allow what is improperly called “the suspension of the *Habeas Corpus*” to die a natural death. If it were suffered to expire in the present crisis, he should think it not a natural death, but a criminal and monstrous act, dangerous to the security, and perhaps fatal to the civil and religious existence of this country.

The question was then put, and carried without a division.

*The Duke of Bedford* said, that the result of the motion which he lately made in that House, was so unsatisfactory to him, and the subject which it involved so important and interesting to the Public, that he should bring forward another motion of a similar nature, in order, if possible, to obtain their Lordships unequivocal decision, so interesting to the nation in general; and he was the more emboldened to this, as he verily believed a majority of their Lordships were desirous of removing the obstacles in the way of a negotiation for peace. His Grace gave notice that he should make his motion on Thursday se’nnight.

Adjourned at ten o’clock.

## PROTEST

*Against the passing of the Bill for suspending the Habeas Corpus Act, entered on the Journals, Feb. 4.*

### “ DISSENTIENT,

“ I. Because whatever pretence there may have existed in the last session of Parliament, for suspending the *Habeas Corpus Act*, that pretence is now removed: The partial *ex parte* examinations of the Committees of Parliament, having been refuted by the verdicts of juries, who, with labour unexampled in the legal annals of this country, after duly weighing the evidence of both sides, acquitted the persons indicted for a treasonable conspiracy.

“ II. Because intentions hostile to the constitution being entertained by persons, few in number, and devoid of weight and consequence in the country, do not justify the depriving all  
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the people of Great Britain of that security which our laws so anxiously provide for personal liberty.

“ III. Because we find that, as soon as those plots and conspiracies (which have heretofore caused the suspension of the people’s right to their *Habeas Corpus*) had been dealt with according to law, and that the conspirators had been convicted and punished, the danger being over, the suspension has dropped. In the same manner, when the proved innocence of the accused has negated the supposed conspiracy, and when it is not even pretended that any new or other plot exists, to continue to suspend this great and essential safeguard of our freedom is equally contrary to the example set us by our ancestors, and inconsistent with that protection, which, as legislators, we are bound to afford to the personal security of all our fellow-subjects.

“ IV. Because we consider that the national spirit of English freedom, to which was owing the high place that we once held amid surrounding nations, is either checked or deadened by causeless acts of despotism ; or that the disgust, necessarily generated by such a conduct, is likely (if any thing can produce such an effect upon this free and enlightened nation) to raise a spirit of disaffection even to the constitution itself.

“ V. Because when we trace the history of the *Habeas Corpus* Act, we find, among other securities from oppression, it was chiefly meant to ensure to the subject a speedy trial, when accused of treason or treasonable practices, and to avert the tyranny of tedious imprisonment for those crimes. We conceive, therefore, that if the Legislature is, upon all occasions of suspicion of traitorous acts, to suspend the operation of that most important and invaluable statute, security to the subject must be removed, at the very crisis, and in the very case, when it was meant by the wise and enlightened framers of that law most to shield and protect him.

“ NORFOLK.

“ BEDFORD.

“ LAUDERDALE.

“ GUILDFORD.”

## HOUSE OF COMMONS.

TUESDAY, Feb. 3.

Mr. M. Robinson moved, “ That there be laid upon the table an account of all the starch made out of wheat and other materials, that had paid duty from the 1st of January 1794,

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to the 1st of Jan. 1795;" and also, "That there should be laid upon the table an account of all the hair-powder made out of wheat flour, and other materials."

*Mr. Secretary Dundas* brought up an account of the troops of the King of Prussia, employed in the last campaign, agreeably to the treaty made at the Hague in the month of April 1794; and also an account of the British troops killed, wounded, and missing, in the course of the last campaign.

The Bill for the purpose of more effectually manning his Majesty's navy, by raising a certain number of men, in proportion to the tonnage of every outward-bound merchant-ship, &c. was read a second time, and ordered to be committed the next day.

The Bill for more effectually manning the navy, by raising a certain number of men for the sea service, in proportion to the number of parishes, was read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time the next day.

Adjourned.

## HOUSE OF LORDS.

WEDNESDAY, Feb. 4.

*Lord Granville* delivered a Message from his Majesty to the following effect :

" G. R.

" His Majesty thinks it proper to acquaint the House of Lords that he has received from the Emperor strong assurances of a disposition to make the greatest exertions for the common cause in the course of the next campaign : But it is represented, on the part of his Imperial Majesty, that these efforts cannot be made without the assistance of a loan, which his Imperial Majesty is desirous of raising on the credit of the revenues of his hereditary dominions, under the guarantee of his Majesty, with the concurrence of Parliament, to the extent of four millions : And it is stated, that such a loan, in addition to his other resources, would enable his Imperial Majesty to employ against the common enemy, a force of 200,000 effective men.

" His Majesty is of opinion, that, on these grounds, such an arrangement would be beneficial to the common cause ; but his Majesty thinks that it would be still more advantageous, if, by the means of a similar loan, to a larger extent, the Emperor should be enabled to employ a force still more considerable ; and his Majesty has directed his Minister at Vienna to express his Majesty's readiness to recommend to his Parliament an arrangement founded on that principle.

" Some

“Some temporary advances which his Majesty was induced to make for the immediate supply of the Austrian army, under the pressure of unforeseen circumstances in the latter part of the last campaign, will be included in any arrangement of this nature.

“As soon as the negotiation is concluded, his Majesty will not fail to communicate the result to Parliament.”

His Lordship, after the usual form of reading, moved that the Message be taken into consideration on the following Monday.

Lord Lauderdale objected to this message, as conveyed in terms of ambiguity which he did not clearly understand. If this money should be granted to the Emperor, what security had we that those two hundred thousand men would actually take the field? We had sufficient proofs of the fidelity of one of our Continental Allies, viz. the King of Prussia, who received our money, and never produced the men. Besides, there was included in his Majesty's Message a hint relative to certain sums of money which were not specifically mentioned, nor could he understand whether these sums were to be included in that four millions stated in the Message. There might also have been some proposition on the part of the Court of Vienna relative to the security we were to have for the performance of this agreement on their parts. These points, he said, he wished to have some information on, and he therefore called on his Majesty's ministers to explain them.

Lord Grenville said, that in respect to the sum already paid to the Emperor, that was a matter of figures which he could not precisely ascertain; but if the Noble Earl would move for the accounts to be laid upon the table, that motion should be complied with, and his Lordship might know the sum minutely. In respect to the security, he could affirm it would be a good one; and as to the indefinite sum, that was a matter connected with the other, which would come with much more propriety into debate, when the subject came under their Lordships' consideration next Monday, than it could possibly now do, when not more than half a dozen Peers were present.

The Earl of Lauderdale again pressed his motion, and insisted that he had a right to receive from the Noble Secretary of State every information he asked respecting this business.

Lord Grenville desired him to look to the precedents of the House, and to recollect, when a particular day was set apart for discussing a motion, it was not regular previously to debate it.

Lord Darnley professed himself a strenuous supporter of the measures of Administration, because he was confident they

the Governor and Deputy-Governor of the Bank of England: If any money was to be sent out of the kingdom, it was the Bank who must furnish it; and they, from their situation, must be acquainted with the extent of any specie brought into the country. They therefore must both be best acquainted with the state of specie at present in the country, and the effect of the fluctuation that must be produced by sending so large a sum out of it, as was proposed to the Emperor.

He concluded with moving, "That the Governor and Deputy-Governor of the Bank of England do attend this House to-morrow."

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that in opposing the motion of the Hon. Gentleman, he did not at present mean to enter much at large into the subject. He believed that the Hon. Gentleman could scarcely have made a motion more unwelcome to those who were its objects, than by requiring the Governor and Deputy-Governor of the Bank of England to attend the Bar of the House of Commons, in order to be examined on a speculative opinion,—“What were the effects of sending such a sum of money out of the country?” He knew of no way in which they could communicate the information that was required, except by giving an account of their own banking transactions. The Bank of England, though upon a different scale, he compared to a great banking-house; and it could not be possible to institute the inquiry that was proposed, without injustice, impolicy, and violence. The motion brought forward by the Hon. Gentleman was such as ought rather to furnish a ground of argument the next day.

To guard Gentlemen, however, against forming any sudden and incautious conclusion from the specious pretexts urged in opposition to the loan, he said, he should make some few cursory observations upon them, referring at the same time to the improved experience of enlightened times, and the history of the country.

The exportation of specie had been held out as destructive to the wealth of a country, whereas the exportation of specie was to be considered merely in the same light as any other exportation of commerce. Too rigid an adherence to the maxim of hoarding up their specie in countries where they had accumulated a large quantity of silver, had been found to be ruinous to their commerce. The same state of Europe that called upon this country for new and unheard-of exertions, had produced also an influx of wealth, not less unusual and extraordinary.

That the exportation of specie has constituted wealth and contributed to our resources, is such a self-evident proposition

tion as scarcely to occupy a moment's examination. For a further demonstration of the truth, however, let us look to other countries where the exportation of silver is prohibited, and we shall find them cramped in their commerce, in their manufactures, and even in the actual receipts of their revenue.

On the other hand, he was not ignorant that a sudden exportation, to a large and irrecoverable amount, that is, to such an amount as could not be easily compensated for, by the influx and reflux of merchandise, might make a sudden and alarming revulsion. If the exportation of specie did lead at all to any danger or alarm, the question that ought then to engage the attention of the House would be, Whether, from that exportation of specie, there does not arise a sufficient and competent influx of specie by the improved manufactures or other commodities to occasion a rebound? That such are the consequences, are facts obvious to all.

Another remarkable and cogent fact must obtrude itself also upon every recollection, and give fresh animation to such depressed spirits as the pretended dangers influence. It is both palpable and notorious, that the safety of this country has operated with so much effect, as not only to encourage our own hopes and exertions, but to reimburse the great and extraordinary expences which those exertions have occasioned. We have extraordinary difficulties, it is true, but let it be remembered also that we have extraordinary means to assist us. Great Britain, in this mighty continental struggle, is become the asylum both of persons and of property, and in fact the centre of the wealth of Europe; and the effect of her safety and security in such a war of desolation is (as we last year experienced, when, notwithstanding the great drains which were made by the extraordinaries, and the subsidy of the King of Prussia), our commerce was soon recovered from its temporary stagnation, and our merchants were enabled to survive the temporary depression which had before taken place, and had only served to establish credit upon a more firm and solid basis; this was the surest criterion of the flourishing and permanent resources of the country.

Nor was this all: Our exchange, instead of being sunk, has grown more favourable to our interests, even more favourable than it was before hostilities commenced. As a proof, the price of dollars is much cheaper than before the war: And hence we must conclude that the exportation of specie does not lead to the evils which are with so much zeal and ingenuity asserted.

If the theory of such danger were well founded, the principles from which it is deduced are in the greater part erroneous, and in the less exaggerated. Under the guarantee of



this kingdom it is that the loan is made, and must it therefore absolutely follow that the loan is wholly supplied in the specie of this country?—Certainly not. The greatest part of it may be filled by subscriptions in other countries, under the faith and assurance they repose in our credit. Part of it may be paid in bills of exchange, and no inconsiderable share be discharged by the variety of circuitous modes of dealing, such as stores, merchandise, &c. There cannot be a doubt indeed but it may have one melancholy effect; and at first serve to lower the price of exchange; but even this is not without its counterbalance, since it will cheapen imports, but heighten the articles of exportation.

Having briefly recapitulated the most prominent arguments of what the Hon. Gentleman advanced, and being conscious that to examine the Governor and Deputy-Governor of the Bank of England would be to betray them inadvertently to the disclosure of their secrets,—“ I shall give the motion,” said the Chancellor of the Exchequer, “ my most sincere and unqualified negative.”

*Mr. Alderman Anderson* said, that it was impossible to add any thing to what had been so ably stated by the Right Hon. Gentleman; and he had only to remark on the injurious effect of some questions that might be proposed to the Governor and Deputy-Governor of the Bank of England, by Members of that House, if the motion of the Hon. Gentleman should be carried.

*Mr. Harrison* said, he could by no means discover that the exportation of specie occasioned by the loan, bore any comparison to that exportation of specie, which is the cause and the effect of merchandise. Where the exportation of specie in mercantile transactions is restrained or prohibited, the nations, it is true, are consequently cramped in their manufactures and resources, for where money is exchanged for raw materials, the raw materials are used in the manufactures of the country, which by their exportation produce employment for industry, an increased account to the merchant, and a large revenue to the state. But can the Right Hon. Gentleman, he asked, affirm that the exportation of specie, which will do all this in mercantile affairs, will do it likewise in war? So large an amount to be transmitted without any immediate recompence, in his mind, became alarming to the extreme.

*Mr. Thornton* requested the Hon. Gentleman to withdraw his motion, as one that might be inconvenient in its consequences, and that could not be acceptable to his relation, whose attendance was required at the bar.

*Mr.*

*Mr. Hussey* said, he did not view this question in a commercial light; undoubtedly if the Governor and Deputy-Governor were to appear at the bar, it would be impossible to prevent the Members of that House from putting to them any questions they might think proper, and this was what appeared to him the only plausible objection to his motion. As to every thing that had been said with respect to the exportation of specie for mercantile purposes, the case here was entirely different; the Right Hon. Gentleman well knew that the money which was now proposed to be sent out of the country would never return. As to persons in foreign parts subscribing to the loan, the pretext was too flimsy almost to deserve an answer. Those persons must be guaranteed by bills upon this country, and it was of little consequence whether we paid the sum in money, or in money's worth. It was impossible for the Right Hon. Gentleman to judge of the operation of sending so large a sum of money out of the country; it was therefore that he wished to apply for information to those who were best able to estimate the consequences of such a measure. He declared, he had brought forward his motion, not as a party-question, but from a regard to the safety of the country. He feared that the loan now proposed, would be extremely prejudicial to the state of public credit; how far his apprehensions were well founded, the sequel would prove, but he must consider it as a measure full-fraught with danger and alarm. *Mr. Hussey* said, he found what he had suspected, that the Right Hon. Gentleman was master of the subject, and had previously considered it well; but much as the Right Hon. Gentleman had argued against the motion, he doubted whether, if he sat on that side of the House, he could not have produced many, many stronger arguments for it. He paid a compliment to the distinguished eloquence of the Chancellor of the Exchequer; but said, if any thing was wanting to strengthen his disapprobation of the measure, nothing could be more effectual for that purpose, than the very arguments which the Right Hon. Gentleman had urged in its support.

The motion was then put, and negatived without a division.

*Mr. Courtenay* asked, what was the amount of the sums already advanced to the Emperor?

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, the sums could not be exactly ascertained, as they had been advanced by the Commander in Chief, with the authority of his Majesty, for the use of the troops, as the pressure of circumstances required; but he believed that they might amount, in the whole, at the end of last month, to about 490,000*l.*

## MANNING OF THE NAVY.

The Bill for more effectually manning his Majesty's Navy, by raising a certain number of men, in proportion to the tonnage of every outward-bound merchant-ship, went into a Committee.

*Mr. Harrison* offered a new clause to the following effect:—  
 "Be it further enacted, that every person enjoying a place or pension, of the value of 300*l.* per annum, shall find one seaman, or two landmen; every person enjoying a place or pension of the value of 500*l.* two seamen, or four landmen; and for every addition of 200*l.* per annum, one seaman, or two landmen."

*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that he scarcely knew whether this clause belonged to the present Bill, or to the Bill for raising men from the parishes, it had so little relation to either. He was at a loss to determine whether the Hon. Gentleman meant it as a joke upon the Bill, or upon the motion which he had last year brought forward with respect to sinecures and pensions.

*Mr. Harrison* disclaimed all idea of a joke; he was convinced that the principle upon which he had founded his clause was that which must ultimately prevail, but admitted that it more properly belonged to the Bill for raising men from the parishes.

The Bill then went through the Committee, the blanks were filled up, and, the House being resumed, the report was received, and, on the motion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, ordered to be taken into consideration on Friday se'nnight.

The Bill for raising men from the parishes, &c. was read a second time.—Ordered to be committed the next day.

Went through the Bill for suspending the *Habeas Corpus*, and agreed to the Amendments made by the Lords.

Heard Counsel on the Ear-Brink Drainage Bill.

Adjourned.

*HAVING obtained a more correct and circumstantial account of Mr. Curwen's Speech on the Suspension of the Habeas Corpus Bill, than was given in the Report of the Debate on that subject in the House of Commons, on the 23d of January last, we take this opportunity of inserting it.*

“ **MRS. SPEAKER,**

“ I should not have persevered in wishing to obtrude myself on your notice, had I not felt, from the importance and magnitude of the question, a duty to my constituents, my country, and myself, which forbade me to give a silent vote. The question involves not only the present liberty of the subject, but its very existence. The sentiments I shall offer to the House can have no claim to its attention but from the sincerity with which they are delivered.

“ This is a moment, when every party distinction should vanish. I look, Sir, to measures, not to men. It matters not who be the minister, provided he be equal to the situation. My support he shall cheerfully have in every exertion for the defence of the country. I have listened, Sir, to every thing that has fallen from the Learned Gentleman (the Attorney General), of whose abilities and integrity I have the highest opinion: And great indeed has been my astonishment, and much my consolation and satisfaction, to find not one paper, not one transaction adduced in support of the measure, which is not to be found in the Report of the Secret Committee of last year. We are called upon, Sir, for a renewal of the measure, not from any reference to the present moment, not from any consideration of the actual situation of the country, but from a reference to that state, in which it was supposed to have stood last year. Agreeing in every sentiment, in every opinion as to the nature of those papers, and deprecating as much as he can their pernicious tendency; agreeing that they called for the most serious attention of the Executive Government; I totally dissented from the necessity of this measure on a former occasion. And why? Sir, because my mind was led to that conclusion, which the Hon. and Learned Gentleman has this night for the first time declared to the House. He now admits, what I always believed, that their numbers were not considerable: That there was not one tenth part, whose views were dangerous to the constitution: Agreed in no one plan, they were not formidable even in proportion to their numbers. I then thought what I am now more than ever convinced of, that the power constitutionally lodged in the hand of Government is amply sufficient for every purpose of security.

“ At what moment, Sir, were these opinions, these new-fangled doctrines most likely to pass current? Now! when their

their falsity has been fully proved, when the misery, which has attended them in another country, has exceeded what the most alarmed imagination could have conceived? No! Sir. If there was a moment, when danger was to be apprehended from them, it was when they were *new*. Their novelty excited surprise, and might have allured men into an acquiescence with doctrines, which reason and reflection have long ago shewn were not calculated to produce any one of the advantages, so speciously held out. On the contrary, wherever they have prevailed, unexampled calamity has been the consequence. Sir, I draw a source of security from those very papers; when I find them every where complaining of the little effect they have had with the people. Whence has this proceeded? not surely from a want of energy, for was there ever a disposition to make more glorious efforts in the defence of the country? No! Sir; their rejection has proceeded from the good sense of the people, who are not to be deluded by specious speculations; and who will not make an experiment beginning with the sacrifice of a constitution, which experience has proved to them to have produced so many blessings.

"Can the Right Hon. the Chancellor of the Exchequer deny, that unparalleled exertions have been made in arming the country? Was the military force ever so numerous? Is there more than one opinion in this House and the country at large in granting every thing, that ministers shall deem requisite for the defence of the country? What, Sir, are the sentiments of my constituents, whose petition lies on your table? Endeavour to obtain the blessings of peace, but withhold nothing, that shall make it honourable and lasting. Such, Sir, I believe, is the language of every man in the country. Is it wise—is it prudent—to adopt a measure, that is a *libel* upon the attachment and loyalty of the country? A measure creating distrust among ourselves, and confidence in our enemies. Was there a disposition in the people to be factious and dissatisfied, might not the conduct of the war afford a wide field? Great and unexampled as have been the disasters attending it, are they wholly to be attributed to fortuitous circumstances? No, Sir; much might be attributed to the want of abilities in the Right Hon. Gentleman, properly to direct the force of this country. Yes, Sir, while he has his Majesty's confidence, and that of this House, the nation is willing to grant every thing he can require. Sir, I saw with astonishment the first steps that were taken by the Right Hon. Gentleman in the system of alarm. Then arose in my mind the most serious apprehensions, that they would lead to the involving this country in the calamities of war. I beg to call

to the recollection of the House the beginning of May 1792, when a Right Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Burke) so eloquently, and with but too much success, first sounded the trumpet of alarm, and called upon the Right Hon. Gentleman to exert the full force of Government against those doctrines. What was the reply of the Right Hon. Gentleman? "As for the country being in a state of ferment, he did not think so, and believed his Hon. Friend had gone too far, when he said it. If there were any, who entertained opinions inimical to the constitution, he really believed their numbers were small, and their proceedings too insignificant to be dangerous: For the great body of the people were firmly united in their love for the constitution, and had a proper sense of the many blessings they had enjoyed under it." *Vide Parl. Reg. vol. xxxiii. page 36.*

"Yet, after this, in the same month his Majesty's Proclamation came forth, warning us against the dangers that threatened the country. How is such conduct to be accounted for? This miserable policy answered but too successfully the ends that were proposed by it. Dreadful has been the consequence, whether we view it in respect to the calamitous war, into which it has plunged us, or in respect to the detestable system of *spyism*, which has destroyed public confidence and private security.

"Sir, the Learned Gentleman has told us, though three successive juries have negatived the existence of a *plot* in this country, we are not therefore to infer, that it did not exist in Scotland, where two convictions have taken place. In my conscience, Sir, I do not believe, that it ever did exist, but in that *wretch*, who has justly paid the forfeit of his crimes; and in this I am borne out by the general sentiment of that country. Sir, this *wretch*—and I trust for the sake of humanity few such there have been—finding the information he gave to Government led to the belief rather of security, than of danger, was determined to try if he could not work upon the temper of unsuspecting men, and lead them into a situation so criminal, that their sacrifice should procure him attention and reward from Government. God be praised, the ruin he intended for others, fell upon his own head. But is the indignation every man must feel, for so consummate a villain, confined to this transaction alone? Does it not lead us to execrate a system calculated to produce such horrid consequences?

"Sir, many of these papers owe their existence to the supineness of Government, who for two years totally disregarded and despised them. Is it not in proof upon the late trials how much their spies have goaded on and inflamed the *societies*

of

of which they were members, in order to screen themselves from suspicion? Much, Sir, much satisfaction have these late trials afforded to every independent man in the country; proving how incorrupt was the source of public justice. The dangers, I apprehend, are not from these miserable papers. No! Sir, it is from the disbelief of *public virtue*. Every day's experience lessens the opinion of the people: They know not *to where* or *to whom* they can look with confidence, or on whom they can firmly rely. What, Sir, can they think, when they see Gentlemen, who professed that the imminency of the danger which threatens the country, called upon them to renounce old friendships, to forget their recorded opinions of the violation of the constitution, with which the introduction to power of that Right Hon. Gentleman was attended? Sir, I gave them full credit for the high ground of principle they had taken, but how have they conducted themselves? Is it not notorious, that there has been more jobbing and contention for power, than ever disgraced the most corrupt Administration, in times of the most profound security? Sir, when I look to a Noble Earl, whose name is respectable from the long services of his predecessor, possessed of an immense fortune, bargaining for the provision of a child at the expence of his country, I protest to God, Sir, this monstrous corruption transports me at times beyond the bounds of moderation. If, Sir, the possession of every thing which fortune or situation can give, with every thing to lose, and nothing to gain, cannot exempt me from such sentiments of indignation, what must be the effect upon men in lower situations, who can hardly bear the burdens for the necessary defence of the country? and what additional ones may we not be obliged to impose?

"Let us not, Sir, misapply our time in providing remedies for dangers which *do not exist*. Let us act so as to regain the confidence we have lost. Let us restore to the people the perfect enjoyment of their liberties. Let us, Sir, by every action convince them of our unwillingness to infringe upon their rights, or to load them with any burdens, beyond what unfortunately the pressure of the moment requires. Then, Sir, I dare pronounce, there will not be found less energy, spirit, and resolution to maintain the constitution, than there were exerted for its establishment. Then, Sir, we may bid defiance to foreign and domestic incendiaries. The contest will then be, who can best and most ably defend his country."

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